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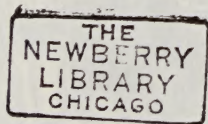
REFORMED

PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH.

BY

DAVID D. DEMAREST,

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH OF HUDSON, NEW YORK.



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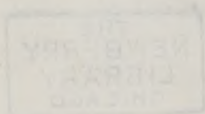
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P R E F A C E.

THE history and design of this little volume can be explained in few words. In the winter of 1853-4, I delivered a course of lectures on the History and Characteristics of the Reformed Dutch Church to my congregation at Hudson, N. Y. These were afterward repeated by invitation at Jersey City, and also at New Brunswick. Many of those who heard them have asked and advised their publication, urging that there is a felt want in our Church of a volume exhibiting in a compressed and accessible form her history and peculiarities, which might be extensively circulated among our families, be placed in all our Sunday-school libraries, and be put into the hands of any who may desire to become acquainted with us. These considerations have induced me to review the lectures, and

to cast them into the present form for publication, in the hope that the direct good contemplated might be accomplished; and especially that attention might be called to a most interesting field of historical research, inviting the entrance of those whose time and resources will allow them to explore it.

The book is one of outlines, and pretends only to be a manual or hand-book of the topics treated in it. Brevity has been studied, often at the sacrifice of very interesting matter, and which should certainly find a place in a full history. By inserting many things which in the face of strong temptation have been reluctantly ruled out, the book might perhaps have been made more entertaining to the general reader. It is hoped, however, that it will be found to meet the specific end for which it has been prepared, and that many will be encouraged to seek for more full information on particular parts in the volumes to which reference has been made. It will readily be seen that the original sources of information consulted have not been numerous, but that free use has been made of the labors of others, of which grateful acknowledgment is made.

The rise of the Church in the Netherlands was intimately connected with the political revolution in that country. Hence the character of our first chapter, and hence the importance of consulting the histories that treat of civil affairs, as well as those which confine their attention more closely to ecclesiastical matters. Brandt's "Reformation in the Low Countries" and the volumes of Schiller and Prescott should be read together. Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," which we have not yet seen, is doubtless a rich treat to those who are interested in the subject. More full information about the church in this country than the following pages contain, may be found in Brodhead's admirable "History of New York" Gunn's "Life of Dr. Livingston," and the "Essays on the History of the Reformed Dutch Church," published originally in the *Christian's Magazine*, and republished with additions in the *Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church*.

Very valuable information is also contained in the numerous historical articles contributed to the *Christian Intelligencer* by the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt, to whom I am greatly indebted for the help and en-

couragement he has afforded me, as well as for the Introduction.

The volume is sent forth with the prayer that it may not foster a narrow, sectarian spirit, but rather excite the gratitude of our people for their privileges, cause them to give due honor to the memories of those by whose sacrifices they were purchased, and lead to an imitation of the tolerant spirit of their ancestors.

HUDSON, May, 1856.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY T. D. W

THIS volume will prove highly acceptable and useful not only to members of the churches and congregations of our own denomination, but also to the Christian community at large. Inquiries are often made in order to obtain information as to the history and character of our Reformed Dutch Church, her present state, her institutions, her standards of faith, form of church government, etc. Hitherto we have stood in need of a volume, popular in its character, which, in a succinct and comprehensive form, will meet these inquiries, and prove a satisfactory manual deserving to be extensively circulated. This has now been procured. The course of lectures delivered by the author has been revised and prepared for publication by him at the request of the Board of Publication. Having been favored with the perusal of the manuscript, I felt that it was peculiarly fitted to meet the design with which the Board of Publication was instituted, and that being prepared with care and fidelity, it was precisely of the character needed. As the work embraces many subjects of interest and importance, it rather contains succinct statements and hints than full illustrations, and the reader will often be led to wish for more copious exposition. But it is evident that the volume, intended for popular use and general circulation, is sufficiently large, and is to be commended for the judicious condensation

which it exhibits. It will be useful by exciting the desire in many readers to seek other existing sources of information as to the history of Holland, of her Reformed Church, and of the Reformed Dutch Church in North America. The thought was at one time entertained of briefly elucidating some points in the historical narrative by notes in an appendix, but this was relinquished from the consideration that to do justice to them would require more space than ought to be allowed.

The history of Holland, to which there is a brief reference in this volume, is among the most interesting that can be found in the annals of history, particularly the struggle in the times of the Reformation with Spanish, Papal, and Imperial power combined, which led to the independence and the establishment of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces of Holland and of the Protestant faith, displaying the most interesting and thrilling incidents amid the constancy of valorous effort and patient endurance under the most crushing and diabolically cruel persecutions. This, combined with the onward prosperity and influence of the United Provinces in the subsequent centuries in regard to commerce, naval prowess, literature, and religion, have rendered the study of her history attractive, and yet it has not gained the attention it deserves. True, in the pages of Watson's "Philip II.," Schiller's "Revolt of the Netherlands," and Davies' "History of Holland," much information was to be found, but they had not made their way extensively among the reading public, and much remained to be supplied for a full and accurate narrative of the events recorded in them with enlightened discrimination. It has been reserved for two American authors to enter into this field of historical research, who, after the most careful investigation and preparation, have published works which have been at once recognized as of standard excellence. Prescott has been known with a world-wide reputation by his former works as among

the most accomplished and trustworthy of historical writers, equally distinguished by the clearness and beauty of his style, the arrangement of his materials, and the extent and accuracy of his researches. His "Philip the Second," not long since published, will add to his reputation. The period occupied by it reaches from the abdication of Charles V. in 1555 to 1570, soon after the memorable vice-royalty of the cruel Duke of Alva. The continuation of the work promised will, we hope, soon be given to the public. A large amount of new and original materials were by patient and industrious inquiry obtained for its preparation. A large proportion of the two volumes published relates to the events in the Netherlands. The other work referred to, which is just published in three fine octavo volumes, is "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," by J. L. Motley, of Boston, in New England, who has been residing for a few years past in Europe, engaged in diligently collecting from various sources in Holland, Germany, Spain, and Belgium, materials, both published and in manuscript, and in preparing the work. It reaches down to the assassination of William of Orange in 1584, and a continuation is promised. The name of the author was previously almost unknown, but it has at once gained high distinction, and concurrent testimonies are flowing in to the value of the work. It is copious in its details, and the narrative throughout inspires an interest which is not allowed to flag to the very close.

While the spirit of Protestantism and republicanism is prominent and strong in these volumes, there is a *desideratum* which, we trust, may yet from some source be supplied—we allude to the religious movement in the Netherlands, tracing it to its sources, delineating its character, and showing its influence. The Reformation, ordinarily in popular estimate connected with the appearance and course of Luther, was related to influences on the public mind in a greater or less degree by

evangelical truth previously disseminated. This was particularly the case in the Netherlands. During the severe and almost exterminating persecution of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, very many fled and took their abode in the Netherlands, and there in their retirement continued to cherish the faith of their fathers. In the north-eastern provinces there arose toward the close of the fourteenth century an association whose influence was handed down in the subsequent century, for the advancement of evangelical truth, and prepared and aided the work of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It was termed "*The Brethren of the Common Lot*," of which Gerard Groote was the principal founder. Their principles were of an evangelical stamp, and they instituted seminaries of education and promoted popular instruction. In these seminaries the celebrated Thomas à Kempis and Erasmus were trained. In one of these schools John Wessel of Gröningen, ordinarily termed Gansevoort, received instruction. He was emphatically to Holland and Germany what Wickliffe was to England, "the morning-star of the Reformation." His writings, which are quite numerous, unfold the leading vital truths of the Gospel and expose the corruptions of them by the Church of Rome, while he yet cherished a lingering attachment to that church. He was for a series of years professor at Heidelberg and Groningen, and died at the age of sixty-nine in 1489. Among his pupils were Agricola and Reuchlin, who were distinguished for their influence in promoting the cause of classical literature and evangelical religion. Luther bore the following testimony to the writings of Wessel Gansevoort: "If I had read Wessel sooner, my adversaries would have presumed to say that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him, so consonant are our minds." A translation of Ullman's recent work, entitled "*Reformers before the Reformation, principally in Germany and the Netherlands*,"

was published during the last year at Edinburg in two volumes. The second volume is entirely devoted to the "Brethren of the Common Lot" and "John Wessel Gansevoort," and will be found highly interesting, and as it is to be obtained here, we commend it to our ministerial brethren. The seeds of evangelical truth were thus scattered in the Netherlands, and would doubtless soon have ripened into a large product, had not the severity of persecution, commencing with the accession of Charles the Fifth, and increasing in its onward course under Philip II., repressed it. In Germany, from motives of policy, the emperor restrained himself from the introduction of the inquisition and the severity of persecution, while these were introduced and continued in an unequalled manner and degree in the Netherlands. Thousands of the confessors of the faith fled for a refuge elsewhere, while tens of thousands lost their lives, and as many more met with confiscation of property and imprisonment. With the materials that might be collected, the pen of a McCrie, who wrote the history of the Reformation struggle in Spain and Italy, or of a D'Aubigné, would furnish a volume of rare interest. There is no portion of the history of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so deeply interesting to the citizens and Christians of our American Republic, as that of the Reformation struggle in Holland, and of the rise, establishment, and progress of the Dutch Republic—the type and precursor of our own federal government.

The account in this volume of the Arminian or Remonstrant controversy, the measures to which it led, and the calling and acts of the Synod of Dort, is necessarily succinct and brief; but it fairly and accurately states the character of this controversy and the course of events arising from it. The several points in it are capable of elucidation and vindication. After the Reformed Church of Holland was organized, and the

Republic established, a degree of religious liberty was allowed unusual at that time. The Jew, who had not found a resting-place for his foot elsewhere, here found a safe asylum. The Romanists, from whom they had experienced such cruelties, were allowed the undisturbed exercise of their worship. The Reformed religion was indeed that of the State, but those who held a different faith were protected in the free enjoyment of it in their separate organizations. The question involved in the Arminian controversy, was not whether those holding these views, and forming distinct church associations, should enjoy their liberty under the protection of the State, but whether holding these views differing from those of the recognized standards, which they had subscribed, they should remain in the bosom of the church. Their disagreement with these standards was evident from their efforts to obtain their revision and alteration, while there was a disingenuousness in their methods in the early stages in professing adherence to them. Uytenbogart was minister of the Reformed Church at the Hague, strongly attached to Arminian views, of great ability, and in his intimacy of great influence with the ruling government, of which Oldenbarnevelt was the head. The government used its power to oppress and exclude from settlement those who embraced the faith of the church, and to fill the pulpits with Arminian pastors. This continued until Prince Maurice was led to open one of the churches in the Hague for the orthodox, and to declare himself with those who held to the doctrines of the Reformed Church. The measures that followed the acts of the Synod of Dort, bearing oppressively on the Arminian pastors, are regretted by all in the light and liberty we now enjoy. But they were the very measures employed by them when the civil power was on their side, while in their case the influence was brought to subvert the plainly written and recognized doctrines of the

church. There is a history of the progress of events connected with this controversy, and the calling of the Synod, prefixed by the States General to the volume of the acts of that Synod published by them. A translation of the large portion of this is found in Dr. Thomas Scott's volume on the Synod of Dort; which furnishes correct and satisfactory information. This volume of Dr. Scott is published by the Board of Publication of the Presbyterian Church, prefixed with an admirable essay by the late venerable Dr. Miller of Princeton. It is supplied by our own Board of Publication, and it is recommended to our people. This volume was, shortly after its publication, reviewed in the *Christian Observer*, the periodical of the evangelical portion of the Church of England, which, in the continuance of fifty years, has sustained a high character for ability, evangelical soundness, and an impartial, courteous, Christian spirit. Although some points of Calvinism are not embraced by him, the reviewer strongly commends the work of Dr. Scott, discriminately vindicates the character of the Synod and its measures, and pronounces its canons an admirable, moderate, and judicious view of the distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism. The delegates from the various Reformed Churches on the continent were unanimous in their approval of the canons and their attachment to the Synod. Bishops Davenant and Hall of England, members of the Synod, afterward bore their testimony in its vindication and praise. Richard Baxter, so moderate and practical in his views, warmly eulogized it. The list of such might be extended. It was not till the introduction of blended Arminianism and High Churchism under Archbishop Laud that the Synod became the theme of unkind and harsh, but, in the main, most undeserved remarks of condemnation. Since then it has not been uncommon to write and utter language of reproach without a full investigation of the subject. The impressions derived and representations given of

this nature are mainly drawn from Brandt's "History of the Reformation in the Netherlands." Brandt's history is in many respects a valuable work, comprised in four large volumes, and furnishing much matter of interest; but he was a Remonstrant minister of a bitter spirit, giving a hue and coloring to the complexion of his work. Leidekker of Leyden replied to him in two volumes, exposing his misrepresentations, particularly as to the course of the Arminian controversy. Brandt's work was translated and published in England, while those of the friends of the Synod never. Uytenbogard, the minister of the Hague, before alluded to as the friend of Arminianism and intimate friend of Oldenbarneveldt, wrote a volume of "Memoirs of his Own Time," which was elaborately and copiously reviewed by Trigland, minister at Amsterdam, and a member of the Synod of Dort. It is well known that during a century past there has been a gradual falling away from the old faith in the Reformed Church of Holland, when after the irruption of the French Revolution there, general indifference to the doctrines of the Reformation prevailed, and Remonstrant, and even neological sentiments prevailed in it. At the restoration of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, a new organic ecclesiastical constitution was constituted, a vague interpretation of the formula of subscription was allowed, while the standards of doctrine remained unchanged. To the state of things now existing there, no further allusion can be made than to remark that it would be interesting to trace the causes which have tended to produce the results now found. About thirty years since, two leading ministers, Ypey and Dermont, published a history of the Reformed Church of Holland from the Reformation to the present time, in four large volumes, containing much valuable matter not readily found anywhere else, but pervaded with the *New Light* spirit. Mr. Vanderkemp, a layman at the Hague, has replied in a work

in three small volumes, tracing the history down to the time subsequent to the Synod of Dort. He has also published "The Life and Times of Prince Maurice of Orange," in four volumes. *Bilderdyk*, the great modern poet of Holland, who died about a quarter of a century since, after unfurling the standard to recover the church to the truth of her own standards, has given an able and interesting view of the ecclesiastical and political transactions which preceded, and were connected with, the proceedings of the Synod of Dort, which is well worthy of being carefully read and pondered. These references are made more particularly for the ministers of our church and others who may wish to investigate the subject.

A colony of Hollanders was planted here not long after the discovery by Hudson, and the first agricultural settlement was made by families in 1624, under the West India Company. The colony of New Netherlands remained for forty years under the Dutch government, when in 1664 it was ceded to the British government. It grew amid many attending and surrounding difficulties, and, at the time of the surrender, there were about ten thousand inhabitants within its bounds. Care was taken to supply the colonists on all occasions, whenever a settlement was made, with a *schoolmaster* and *voorleser*, and with a minister, whenever a sufficient number of settlers was found.

"The History of the Colony of New Netherlands" was presented to the public not long since in a volume prepared with much care, and exhibiting a minuteness and thoroughness in the use and digestion of materials industriously collected, which exhausts the subject. This, in connection with the appearance, form, and style in which these materials are arranged and discussed, place it, in general estimation, among standard works of the kind, and it will continue to retain its place. J.

Romeyn Brodhead, Esq., spent a few years in Europe as agent of the State of New York in fully searching the governmental archives in London, Paris, and the Hague, and drawing thence a large amount of documents, and some also from other sources, extending through the whole of the colonial history of our State. These, with those previously existing in the office of the Secretary of State at Albany, comprise the great body of the materials from which the history of the State is to be compiled and prepared. It is hoped that the health and leisure of Mr. Brodhead will enable him to prosecute his work in successive volumes, which, when completed, will make him recognized as THE Historian of New York. The volume already published has peculiar interest for our own church, and it is a matter of gratification that it is from the pen of one of her own sons.

After the surrender of the Dutch colony, there was very little immigration from Holland; and the enlargement of the number of Dutch inhabitants, and the extension of their settlements, was almost wholly in the way of natural increase. Thus slowly new churches arose, and the supply of ministers was obtained from Holland through the Classis of Amsterdam. It is to be lamented that after the disuse of the Dutch language, the manuscripts of the ministers of the early periods and of others in that language, were often treated as waste paper, and so lost or destroyed. In some cases this has been ascertained. Generally the records of the churches of that time furnish but little matter to fill up a historical account, and give only outlines for an imperfect sketch. The main materials for that period are found in the correspondence of the ministers and churches with the Classis of Amsterdam, who kindly donated them to our General Synod, and were procured from them through the instrumentality of Mr. Brodhead during his residence at the Hague. We have also a volume pre-

served in the archives of Synod, containing the minutes of the original *Cœtus* from 1747 to 1756, when the division into the two parties took place, when the continuation contains the minutes of the *Conferentie*. Since 1771, when the articles of union were formed, we have a regular succession of minutes, kept in the Dutch language until 1794, and after that time in the English.

The long delay in the introduction of English preaching, the first of which took place in the Collegiate Church of the City of New York, while the youth were growing up familiar with the English language, and forming associations with the English inhabitants, was most unfavorable to the growth and prosperity of the church. The disuse was very gradual in the different churches till the early part of the present century, when it soon became wholly relinquished. Another unfavorable influence arose from the contention and excited feeling which sprang up on the subject of the propriety and importance of forming distinct ecclesiastical judicatories here, and educating and ordaining ministers at home. The heated feelings and alienation to which this subject in the *Cœtus* and *Conferentie* dispute, about the middle of the last century gave rise, is strongly represented in this volume. Deeply as this state of things was to be regretted, and unfavorable as its influence was upon the internal welfare and general prosperity of the church, yet there was a principle involved in it of high importance, which was ever prominent in the Reformed Church of Holland, and confessed on all sides here, that is the necessity of a thorough training for the ministry. Those who opposed the preparation of our ministry here, and the organization of an ecclesiastical judicatory, did so mainly on the ground that there were not here adequate means and advantages for due instruction, and that direct subordination to the *Classis* at Amsterdam would best secure this object and the general interests of the

churches. Those, on the contrary, who advocated an independent ecclesiastical judicatory, with power to train, license, and ordain ministers, did so with the design of at once instituting measures to form a proper seminary of learning and a theological professorate. The importance attached by the Reformed in Holland was evidenced by the choice made by the citizens of Leyden, after the close of the prolonged memorable siege of that city, replete with the most thrilling incidents, when the alternative was offered to them of either a perpetual exemption from taxation or the endowment of a university. The citizens unanimously chose a university. In the provinces of Holland, comprising so limited an extent of territory, there were four universities, all of which became renowned seats of learning, resorted to from many sources, and sending forth in various departments of literature some of the best scholars of the age. Hence arose the deep conviction of our Dutch ancestors, who removed from Holland to America, and their descendants, of the importance of a learned ministry. After the separation into Cœtus and Conferentie in 1755, the Cœtus party, advocating the need of educating our ministry here and organizing an independent classis, still to hold continued correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam, commissioned the Rev. Theodorus Frelinghuysen of Albany (the eldest son of the first Dominie Frelinghuysen of Raritan), to visit Holland, with the object of seeking the approbation of the church judicatories there, and gaining means for erecting a seminary of learning under the auspices of the church here. He never returned, having been lost at sea. I have seen the parchment with his commission and recommendation in Latin, signed by the ministers and leading elders of the Cœtus. Had his life been spared, and had he been permitted to hold free intercourse with the brethren in Holland, perhaps the object of healing the dissensions would then have been obtained, which

ten or twelve years afterward was procured through the instrumentality of Dr. Livingston, who returned from Holland, after a four years' course of theological studies, with the olive-branch in his hands, having the full consent of the Classis of Amsterdam for that purpose. It is worthy of observation, that in the very year when Dr. Livingston returned (1770), the object which the Cœtus party had anxiously desired was just obtained, the charter of Queen's College (now Rutgers'). After the articles of union in 1771, the subject of the theological professorate was placed continually in prominence. The letters of the Classis of Amsterdam suggested it, and they sent a recommendation of Dr. Livingston, with one from the theological faculty of the university of Utrecht, where he pursued his theological studies, for that post. The successive steps taken by the Synod in relation to this professorate, and the measures which ripened in our present literary and theological institutions at New Brunswick, are concisely stated in this volume. The early and continued attention paid by our Reformed Dutch Church in America to the institution and endowment of a theological professorate, places her among the first, if not the very first, in promoting and securing the object.

The Reformed Church of Holland, long after her rise in the Reformation, stood distinguished and beloved among her sister churches. The persecuted and oppressed Protestants from different parts sought and found a safe refuge and pleasant residence in her bosom. She continued to hold the pure truths of her standards, and clung in close and cordial fellowship with other branches of the Protestant Church. In late years she has swerved from the faith of her own standards, and she has sunk in the rank of religious distinction and influence in a degree equal to that in which she has sunk in the scale of national distinction and influence. We can not but hope that the seed once sown there, and watered so copiously by

the blood of martyrs, will revive and again bear its precious and abundant harvest. The Church in America, derived from her, has steadfastly adhered to her doctrines and order, and has stood by the side of the churches of other denominations holding to evangelical truth in mutual amity and kind intercourse. Faithfully adhering to her own standards, and cultivating her own field, she has joined hand in hand with others in extending the kingdom of Christ, where common effort was called for. No portion of the Church of Christ has been more divested of the spirit of mere proselyting, and many have supposed her lacking in that proper and generous "*esprit de corps*" which is necessary to draw forth her energies, that by "strengthening her stakes, and lengthening her cords," her means and power of doing good may be increased.

The view given of the truths embraced in her standards, and of her order of church government, is well drawn. It judiciously exhibits and vindicates the excellence of her scriptural doctrines, and also shows the advantages of her Presbyterian church government, with one or two modifications peculiar to her.

The attitude of our church at present, in the increase of her congregations, in the prosperous state of her theological and literary institutions, and in the organization of Boards of the General Synod having distinct objects in charge, operating with promise of increasing success, calls for fervent gratitude, and is calculated to inspire animating hope for the future. Ministers and people should rally in the support of the institutions of the church with cordiality and unanimity, and how blessed would be the result in increasing our means of doing good, and in linking our hearts and hands in such service. Systematic effort in supporting and promoting the various objects to which our church directs attention, needs to be more extensively employed and punctually observed. Such

effort in the spirit of faith and prayer, will be found an important element indicating and advancing our spiritual prosperity. It is hoped that from year to year there will be an onward growth in the developement of her resources to extend the usefulness and efficiency of our different institutions.

Chancellor Kent, in a discourse before the New York Historical Society in 1828, gives the following character of the original Dutch settlers in this State, and their descendants: "The Dutch settlers of New Netherlands were grave, temperate, firm, persevering men, who brought with them the industry, the economy, the simplicity, the integrity, and the bravery of their Belgic sires; and with those virtues they imported the lights of the Roman civil law and the purity of the Protestant faith. To that period we are to look with chastened awe and respect for the beginnings of our city and the works of our primitive family."

The Dutch inhabitants of the colony, increasing by natural descent and intermarriages with others, continued for a long period, perhaps down to the Revolutionary war, the predominant portion. Among them were found many most distinguished in civil and military life, whose names stand prominent on the pages of history. The descendants of those who, in the sixteenth century, fought so valiantly for the attainment of independence, and the formation of the Republic of the United Provinces of Holland, were among the most devoted friends of the cause of liberty in the Revolutionary struggle. Among the ministry of our church there has been a succession of many of learning, piety, and influence, whose memory remains fragrant and embalmed.

These remarks have been extended beyond what was contemplated in writing this commendatory article, in which only a few hints on some of the topics treated in this volume were proposed. It is believed that this volume will answer a most

valuable purpose, that its circulation will be extensively promoted, and that, under the divine blessing, it will be one of the means to unite, and quicken our energies, under the influence of the national motto adopted during the period of the struggle by our forefathers in Holland, at the time of the Union at Utrecht in 1579: "*Eendragt maakt magt* (*Union creates strength*).

T. D. W.

CHAPTER I.

THE REFORMATION IN THE NETHERLANDS.

THE Reformed Church of the Netherlands arose amid the storms of political revolution. She was trained in the school of oppression. It is therefore necessary for us to glance at the previous history of the land of her birth.

The traveler who at the present day visits that wonderful country sees with astonishment what energy, economy, and untiring perseverance have accomplished. Where now are seen flourishing cities, waving fields of corn, or herds of cattle grazing on the green pastures, the sea once held dominion, and now is restrained from reasserting its rights only by the immense barriers which the people have raised between themselves and their enemy. The name Holland or Hollow-land, expresses the nature of the country, as scooped out, lying lower than the sea. The people in their contest with the Spaniards made their dykes and sluices means of defense, and thus employed their old enemy as an ally against the new.

At the earliest period to which we can go back by the light of authentic history, the marshes and islands

at the mouths of the Rhine were occupied by barbarous tribes, among whom the Batavi, a brave and warlike people, were the most prominent. They were never conquered by the Romans, but became their most efficient allies. In due time the Roman sceptre was broken. The hordes of barbarians from the north who sacked the imperial city also overran all parts of the empire. The Saxons, Frisii, Franks, and others, took the place of the Batavi who now disappear from history.

In the latter part of the seventh century the gospel was introduced into West Friesland, now North Holland, by Willebrord a Northumbrian priest. He came by invitation of Pepin who had defeated the Frieslanders and was now desirous of their conversion to Christianity. He was chosen because of the similarity of their language to that of the English. After him, Boniface, who was also an English monk, and became the celebrated missionary bishop of Germany, visited Friesland, accompanied by a large body of clergy. After having baptized thousands of the people and founded many churches, he with his attendants was cruelly murdered at Doekum. By the introduction of the gospel the foundations of civilization and freedom were laid.

The Netherlands now came under the dominion of the Franks. Charlemagne, who was crowned Emperor of the Franks A. D. 800, made Aix la Chapelle his capital, and was there buried. His government was marked with energy. But after his death there were divided counsels and weakened authority. The

various provinces of the Netherlands, obliged to take care of themselves, were governed by counts and dukes who paid homage to the emperors.* These counts and dukes were involved in perpetual wars, and their provinces were often torn by internal dissension. In the fifteenth century the whole of the Netherlands came under one lord of the soil, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. His daughter Maria married Maximilian of Austria. In this way, the Netherlands became a part of the hereditary possessions of the House of Austria. Their son, Philip the Fair, married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and the fruit of their union was the celebrated Charles V., hereditary monarch of Spain, Austria, the Sicilies, the Spanish possessions in America, and the Netherlands. Thus the Netherlands came under the yoke of Spain, a subjection fraught with woes to which the history of the world scarcely presents a parallel. Charles ascended the throne of Spain in 1516, one year before the appearance of Luther as a Reformer, and he was elected Emperor of Germany in 1519.

There is very much in the history of the Netherlands previous to the Reformation to awaken interest and excite admiration. The prosperity of the Southern Netherlands during the fourteenth and fifteenth

* "The counts at this time were officers appointed during pleasure by the sovereigns, to administer justice and superintend military affairs in the cities and provinces, a certain number of whom were placed under the authority of one duke. Many of the dukes and counts rendered their power hereditary and independent under the successors of Charlemagne in France and Germany."—Du Cange, quoted by Davies, *History of Holland and the Dutch*, vol. i., p. 19.

centuries was remarkable. As we now walk through the quiet streets of those quaint old towns, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, we find it hard to realize that they were once the marts for the commerce of the world, that traders from all countries thronged their fairs, that their streets were crowded with the thrifty sons of toil, by whom the most beautiful and costly fabrics were wrought, and that their merchants lived in luxury quite unknown by the rest of Europe.

In these free towns the spirit of liberty was nourished and often broke out in bold resistance. The people were jealous of their rights. Ghent was regarded as the hot-bed of sedition. The burghers of Bruges at one time placed Maximilian himself in confinement, and would not release him until he had made the concessions demanded. By such training the people became qualified for the struggle with the tyranny of Spain.

During this period the people also made progress in the arts. It is claimed that the art of printing was discovered in 1423 by Lawrence Koster of Harlem. Classical studies were revived among them, and an immense impulse was given to their commerce by the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, and also of a new route to the East Indies by doubling the Cape of Good Hope.

Like the rest of Europe, this country was lying in the darkness and under the curse of Popery. God's word was hidden, the traditions of men were followed, the cardinal doctrines of the gospel were obscured, and religion was thought to consist in the worship of saints,

adoration of relics, and observance of ceremonies. When a faint ray of light appeared it was speedily quenched.

But in due time light came that could not be quenched. The lamp that was lighted at Wittemberg was carried into the Netherlands. The writings of Luther and the other Reformers spread every where with inconceivable rapidity, and the people eagerly embraced the words of life. But as England had her Wyckliffe, and Bohemia her Huss and Jerome—"morning stars" that shone before the rising of the sun of the Reformation—so had Holland her Wessel Gansevoort and Rudolf Agricola. These were natives of Groningen, and eminent scholars who, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, fifty years before Luther, studied the Scriptures and came to the knowledge of the doctrine of justification by faith as well as the other cardinal doctrines of the gospel.

Ganesvoort, frequently called Wesselius, was celebrated for his attainments in theology. He taught at Heidelberg, Louvain, Paris, Rome, and finally settled in his native city of Groningen, in the neighborhood of which was a celebrated school over which he exerted great influence until his death in 1489. His views of evangelical truth were clear, and he denied many of the doctrines of the papacy, such as the authority of tradition, justification by works, the sacrifice of the mass, priestly absolution, purgatory, and infallibility of the Pope. Luther, long after he had reached the gospel foundation, became acquainted with the writings of Gansevoort. So clearly did those writings contain

his own evangelical views, that in order to prevent his enemies from using this fact to his disadvantage, he felt called upon solemnly to declare that he had not until then perused them, and that he was comforted and delighted with the confirmation of his faith afforded by them.

Agricola, on the other hand, was distinguished for his attainments in Greek and Latin literature and in various sciences. He spent a great part of his life as a Professor at Heidelberg, and preceded Erasmus in applying a knowledge of Greek to the critical examination of the New Testament. In theological views he harmonized with his friend and countryman Gansevoort. The seed sown by these men was quickened into life by the Reformation.*

Erasmus, the eminent scholar of Rotterdam, by his bold exposures of the corruptions of the church and the vices of the clergy, contributed not a little to convince the people of the need of a Reformation. He at first encouraged the work, but when he saw the approach of days of danger, his faith and courage failed him. "Erasmus would have purified and repaired the venerable fabric of the church with a light and cautious touch, fearful lest learning, virtue, and religion should be buried in its fall; while Luther struck at the tottering ruin with a bold and reckless hand, confident that a new and more beautiful temple would rise from its ashes."†

A mighty and protracted contest for freedom of

* T. D. W. in the *Christian Intelligencer*, Aug. 5, 1852.

† Davies, vol. i., p. 355.

conscience now commenced. The gospel was preached and extensively received, and the Bible was adopted by many as the only rule of faith. The spread of evangelical truth was astonishingly rapid. A people who had been long accustomed to watch and fight for their civil rights might well be expected to embrace and contend for religious liberty. Popery was ready to meet them with her favorite argument of persecution.

Charles was not of a cruel temper, but devoted to the Papal see, and ready to use his power for the maintenance of its dominion over the minds and consciences of his subjects. He thought himself called to root out the growing heresy. Hence, what he could not do in Germany because trammelled by its Protestant princes, he did in his hereditary dominions of the Netherlands where he was free to act. With promptness worthy of a better cause, as early as 1521 he began to issue the most severe edicts against his Protestant subjects in that country.

“By these the reading of the evangelists and apostles, all open or secret meetings to which religion gave its name in ever so slight a degree, all conversations on the subject at home or at the table were forbidden under severe penalties. In every province special courts of judicature were established to watch over the execution of the edicts. Whoever held these erroneous opinions was to forfeit his office without regard to his rank. Whoever should be convicted of diffusing heretical doctrines, or even of simply attending the secret meetings of the Reformers, was to be condemned to death, and if a male, to be executed by the sword, if

a female, to be buried alive. Backsliding heretics were to be committed to the flames. Not even the recantation of the offender could annul these appalling sentences. Whoever abjured his errors gained nothing by his apostacy but at furthest a milder kind of death.”*

These edicts were unrelentingly executed during the reign of Charles by Inquisitors appointed for the purpose, and multitudes suffered death. Yet these ministers of cruelty were greatly impeded in their work by the political institutions of the country and the independent spirit of the people.

Strange as it may seem, yet Charles was always popular in the Netherlands. He was a native of the country, spoke the language of the people, preferred their free manners to the reserve of the Spaniards, conferred office on natives, and was courteous in his intercourse with his subjects. “While his armies trod down their corn fields, while his rapacious imposts diminished their property, while his governors oppressed, his executioners slaughtered, he secured their hearts by a friendly demeanor.”†

In the year 1555 occurred one of the most remarkable events of modern history, the voluntary abdication of Charles V. Enfeebled by disease, tired of the cares of empire, and sick of its hollow splendors, a disappointed and dejected man, he resigned his crown, and retired to the monastery of Yuste in Spain to spend the remainder of his days in seclusion from the world. What a commentary on earthly glory! He

* Schiller's *Revolt of the Netherlands*, p. 44.

† Schiller, p. 46.

sowed to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Never did a prince abuse such splendid opportunities for doing good to his subjects, and the world. How different would have been the course of events if Charles had favored or even tolerated the Reformation.

In a solemn convention at Brussels he placed the sovereignty of the Netherlands in the hands of his son Philip, with the fond and earnest desire that the affection of the people for the father might be transferred to the son. Philip on his part took a solemn oath to respect the Constitution of the States, the liberties, customs, and usages of the people.*

In the character of Philip we find scarcely a single pleasing feature. He was a gloomy, cruel bigot, proud, reserved, revengeful. A Spaniard by birth, and educated by Spanish priests, he had nothing of the special attachment of his father to the Netherlands. He had large ideas of authority, but little generosity, and no sympathy with the common people. Much as the States had suffered under Charles from his oppressive edicts, they looked with dread to the assumption of power by his successor. In his dark and gloomy visage the people read at once of designs against their liberties, and they read correctly.† So far from profiting by the ill success of his father's measures of persecution, he resolved to prosecute them more vigorously, like that foolish king who said to the Israelites on his accession to the throne, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you

* Prescott's Philip II., vol. i, p. 12.

† Schiller, p. 47.

with scorpions."* It was his settled determination at all hazards to root out the Protestant faith from his dominions. He declared himself more willing to be without subjects than to be a king of heretics. He trampled on his oath, broke every pledge, and continually planned new and severer measures.

Philip left the Netherlands in 1559 and committed the government to his sister Margaret, duchess of Parma. He was anxious to introduce the Spanish Inquisition, but knowing that such a measure would produce an immediate and universal rebellion, he satisfied himself with obtaining a remodeling of the Church. Thirteen new bishoprics were formed which were under his control and filled with his creatures.

Perhaps the interests of the Church required this addition, for hitherto there had been only four bishoprics in the whole country. But the people were now suspicious of every new movement and regarded this measure as a serious encroachment on their liberties, for all these new ecclesiastics were to be clothed with inquisitorial powers and to be entitled to seats in the assemblies of the States, where of course they would act not as friends of the people, but as servants of the king. Among them was Cardinal Granvelle, a man of extraordinary abilities and unbounded and unscrupulous ambition. He became archbishop of Mechlin, primate of the Netherlands, and chief councillor of the regent.

The work of persecution now received a fresh im-

* 1 Kings xii. 14.

pulse. The officers of the dreaded tribunal were everywhere at work; tempting rewards were offered for the betrayal and apprehension of the so-called heretics. Yet the gospel spread rapidly. There was enthusiasm for martyrdom, and many went to the stake singing psalms of praise, in which the multitude joined them.

The various encroachments that were constantly made upon the liberties of the country, filled the minds of the nobles, both Catholic and Protestant, with serious alarm. Some who were in the councils of the regent remonstrated, and letters and embassies were sent to Philip, but all to no purpose. At last a large number, chiefly of the lower nobility, bound themselves by a solemn oath to protect each other against the Inquisition. A body of two hundred, which was afterward joined by as many more, proceeded to Brussels to lay a petition before the regent, in which, while they made the most emphatic professions of loyalty, they asked relief for their bleeding country by the suppression of the Inquisition, and the repeal of all oppressive edicts on the subject of religion.

This was the famous league of the *Gueux* or *Beggars*. As they came on foot with their petition, the count of Barlaimont whispered in the ear of the regent, who seemed a little disconcerted, that "they were nothing but a crowd of beggars." This title, applied to them in derision, they adopted, and proclaimed themselves the "*Confederacy of the Gueux*."

* Davies, vol. i., p. 522.—"*Gueux*," French for "beggar."—Prescott's Philip II., vol. ii., p. 12.

This league filled the regent with alarm, and gave great encouragement to the Reformed. They were emboldened to profess their opinions and exercise their worship more openly. In many places the mob, urged by fanatical zeal, entered the churches and threw down pictures, images, and altars. In Flanders alone four hundred churches were despoiled in a fortnight. This resort to violence was unjustifiable, was by no means encouraged by the nobles, and afforded Philip a pretext for the introduction of still severer measures.

Divided counsels, lack of means, and dissensions among the nobles artfully fomented by the government, interfered much with the efficiency of the league. Many of the Catholic members also abandoned it when they saw the excesses of the image-breakers. After a series of reverses in the civil war that ensued it was broken up. But though temporary and unsuccessful, it had a powerful effect on the affairs of the Netherlands. A few years later (1572), under the oppressions of Alva, William Van de Mark having a fleet of twenty four vessels under his command, was refused permission to enter the ports of Denmark or Sweden. He turned to England as his only shelter, but Elizabeth, menaced by Philip in case protection should be afforded to the Gueux, refused to harbor them. Driven to desperation they sailed for the Texel, with a view of attacking the Spanish ships of war lying there, but forced by the weather to enter the Meuse, they took possession of the town of Brill at its mouth. This en-

couraged resistance in other quarters and was the beginning of open hostilities.*

Meanwhile the Protestants were fast tending to efficient church organization. For many years they worshipped privately and called themselves "Der Nederlandsche Kercken die onder 't Cruis sitten," "The Churches of the Netherlands under the Cross." In 1562 a confession of faith was published. It was adopted by the Synod of Antwerp in 1566, and of Wesel in 1568. It was modeled after the confession of the Calvinistic Church of France, embraced thirty-seven articles, and was called the Belgic confession, because its author, Guido de Bres, was a Belgian. It is the same confession that is received by the Reformed Dutch Church in this country.

Perhaps nothing tended more to the progress of the Reformation than public field-preaching which was commenced almost simultaneously in Southern and Northern Netherlands; in the former, by Herman Strijker, to a congregation of some thousands, in a field near Ghent; in the latter, by Jan Arentsen, near the city of Hoorn. These examples were speedily followed in all parts of the country, and multitudes everywhere assembled to listen to the popular stirring eloquence of the preachers. On these occasions infants were presented for baptism, the marriage ceremony was performed, collections for the poor were made, and the

* Davies, vol. i., p. 577. Brill is the Dutch for spectacles. Hence the *jeu-de-mot*:

"De eerste dach von April
Verloor Duc d'Alva zynen Brill."



Psalms which had been translated into Low Dutch, from the French of Marot and Beza, were sung with enthusiasm by the vast congregations.*

Three pastors were soon set over the church of Amsterdam; Jan Arentsen, Peter Gabriel, and Nicolas Scheltius, men of zeal, self-denial, simple manners, and greatly endeared to their flocks. Deacons and deaconesses were appointed at the same time to administer alms without distinction of persons.† Although worship was not held in public until this time, yet it is probable that some churches had already been formed on the Genevan Presbyterian model; for in 1559 rewards were offered for the apprehension of a minister, elder, or deacon; in 1561 the Psalms of Beza were commonly sung in worship;‡ and in 1563, the scattered churches met in Synod at Wesel, because unable to do it with safety in the Netherlands, and there adopted rules of church government and order.

The cup of misery for the Netherlands was not yet full. Philip, exasperated by the conduct of the nobles, enraged by the obstinacy of the people, and mortified by the failure of all his measures to extirpate heresy, was driven to desperation. He forced the publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and determined that the extremest measures of persecution should be pursued. He had hitherto feared to introduce a Spanish army, but it now came composed of 10,000 men,

* Schiller, p. 174.—Prescott, vol. ii., p. 22.—Brandt's Reformation, vol. i., p. 172.

† De Long's Reformation in Amsterdam, p. 531.

‡ Magazine of Ref. Dutch Church, vol. i., p. 195.

headed by that monster of cruelty, the Duke of Alva, who appeared, to the terror of the country, in 1567, and unfortunately just at the time when through the decided measures of the regent, quiet seemed to have been restored. He immediately established a court of twelve, which he called the "Council of Tumults," from its professed design to bring to justice those who had fomented disturbances, but the people more appropriately called it the "Council of Blood." By this court, of which the cruel Vargas was the leading member, the most horrible atrocities were committed. The Counts Egmond and Hoorn were entrapped, insulted with a mock trial, and beheaded in the marketplace at Brussels. Death was decreed against all who had signed the petition against the Inquisition, all who had been in any way connected with the image-breakers, all who had heard a sermon, sung a psalm, or given lodging to a heretical preacher. Every refinement of torture was used, and it was the boast of Alva that in the space of seven years, eighteen thousand persons had fallen by the hands of the executioner, beside those who had perished in battle. One hundred thousand houses were deserted, and their inmates fled for refuge to other nations. Very many of these refugees found their way to England, and introduced into that country the useful manufactures in which they had been engaged in their own land.

This darkest hour of the night heralded the morning. William of Orange was God's chosen instrument for the deliverance of his oppressed people. He was born at Dillenburg in Germany; sent at the age of

eleven to the court of Maria of Hungary ; taken into the confidence of Charles V.; and when a mere youth, put in command of an army against France. On Philip's accession he stood at the head of the nobility of the Netherlands, and was made Stadtholder of Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht.* He was also made one of the Councillors of the Regent Margaret on the departure of Philip to Spain. He remained in the council as long as he could, speaking often boldly and faithfully against the oppressive measures that were pursued. At length, a little before the arrival of Alva, he was compelled by the arbitrary demands of the regent to resign his office. He retired to his hereditary possessions in Germany, and with an anxious mind watched the progress of affairs in the Netherlands. Many exiles gathered around him and entreated him to interpose for the suffering country. He at last consented, and enlisted his four brothers in the cause. At their own expense chiefly an army was raised, and the

* "The Stadtholder was captain-general and admiral of the land and naval forces of the republic. His dignity was originally not hereditary, but elective by the provinces. During war he disposed of all military grades, and conducted all military operations as general-in-chief. The Stadtholder being at the same time admiral of the naval forces of the republic, the commanders of the separate fleets were called "lieutenant admirals." The stadtholder might at any time enter the hall of the States General to propose public measures. But he had no vote and no right to deliberate. During his presence debate was suspended ; and when the object of his visit was attained, he left the assembly. After William I., the dignity of Stadtholder was continued by successive elections in the family of the Prince of Orange until 1672, when William III. procured it to be made hereditary."—Brodhead's *History of New York*, p. 450.

contest with Alva began. The northern provinces soon rallied around William, who gained so many advantages that Alva resigned his office and retired from the country in 1573.

William was called "the Silent," not on account of his taciturnity, but of his ability to keep his own counsel. He was as able to read the thoughts and plans of others as to conceal his own. He has been accused, as might be expected, of selfish and ambitious aims, but how can his patriotism be questioned if we judge him by his works and sacrifices? He opposed all violent revolutionary measures, hoping by petition to obtain a just administration of affairs, and resorted to arms only when nothing else remained to be done; but then he was ready to sacrifice his all. His uncommon sagacity, wisdom, caution, and perseverance none can deny, nor his rightful claim to the title given him by a grateful people, of "Father of their Fatherland."

His parents professed the Lutheran faith, and taught it to him in his childhood, but when he became an attendant on courts, he conformed to the Romish or court religion. On his retirement to Germany he made the subject of religion one of special study, and returned to the faith of the Reformation.* Whether that faith was embraced with the understanding merely, or with the heart also, is known only to God. Yet we can not but hope that divine light had entered the mind of one who after the loss of three brothers could write to the sole survivor as follows, "On account of my grief, I scarcely know what to do. Notwithstanding-

* Prescott's Philip II., vol. ii., pp. 93, 127.

ing, we must always acquiesce in God's will, trusting in the Providence of Him who has given the blood of His own Son for the benefit of His church, and believing that He will do nothing but what shall in the end be for His own glory and the establishment of the Church. Although to the world it may seem impossible, and although we should all return, and the people all perish, yet we may be sure that God will always see to His own cause."*

Is it strange that a people who had such a man for a leader should have manifested extraordinary courage and endurance? For examples of the spirit of the people we need only refer to the sieges of Harlem, Alkmaar, and Leyden. In the defense of these cities women and children stood side by side with the men. When the famished people of Leyden, mad with hunger, demanded of one of the burgomasters,† Peter Vanderwerf, that he should give them food or treat for the surrender of the city, he replied: "I have made an oath which by the help of God I will keep, that I will never yield to the Spaniard. Bread, as you well know, I have none: but if my death can serve you, slay me, cut my body into morsels and divide it amongst you." The burghers‡ called to the enemy from the walls:

* M. Groen's "Kort Overzicht," p. 33.

† "To the burgomasters was committed the care of the police, and the ammunition, of the public peace, and of cleansing and victualling the town." Davies, vol. i., p. 77.

‡ "Burghership was generally obtained by the payment of a sum of money, and the registry of the citizen's name upon the roll of burghers. It was hereditary. It could pass by marriage, and it could be acquired by females as well as by males. Foreigners also, after a year's proba-

"You found all your arguments on the misery and famine that threaten us: you say that we are eaters of dogs and cats; know that when this food shall fail us, we have each a left arm which we will eat while we preserve our right to drive the tyrant and his blood-thirsty bands from our walls: and if God shall, as we have justly merited, deliver us into your hands, we will ourselves set fire to our city rather than become your slaves."*

The dykes were cut, and relief came over the waters to the starving people after they had sustained the siege five months. When the Prince of Orange, to reward their bravery, offered them an annual fair or a university, they at once chose the latter, and this was the origin of the famous university of Leyden.

The idea of throwing off the yoke of Spain was not contemplated by the States at the time that they took up arms against Alva.† In a petition to the king they said: "Since they (the duke and his creatures) take pleasure in our death, and think it their interest to be our murderers, we will much rather die an honorable death for the liberties and welfare of our dear country than submit to be trampled under foot by insolent foreigners, who have always hated or envied us. By

tion could become burghers. The burgher right gave to the citizen freedom of trade, exemption from tolls, special privileges and favors in prosecutions, and an exclusive eligibility to municipal office."—Brodhead, p. 453.

* Davies, vol. ii., p. 12.

† The legislative assembly of each province was called "the States." The States General was composed of deputies from the provinces.

so doing we shall at least transmit to our posterity this fame and reputation, that their ancestors scorned to be slaves to a Spanish Inquisition, and therefore made no scruple of redeeming a scandalous life by an honorable death. We contend for nothing less than freedom of conscience, our wives and children, our lives and fortunes. We do not desire to be discharged from our allegiance to your Majesty, but only that our consciences may be preserved free before the Lord our God, that we may be permitted to hear His holy Word, and walk in His commandments, so that we may be able to give an account of our souls to the Supreme Judge at the last day.”*

But Providence led the people to freedom by a way that they had not known. In 1572 an assembly of the States was held at Dordrecht, and William was proclaimed Stadtholder of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht. The States of Holland at the same time felt compelled for their own safety to expel the Romanists from the churches and to establish the Reformed religion. It was a measure carried with some difficulty, but was felt to be necessary inasmuch as the ecclesiastics were the sworn friends of Spain. They did not, however, forget their own struggles for freedom of conscience, and begin to persecute the Romanists. They decreed that “not only all religions ought to be tolerated but that all restraint in matters of religion was as detestable as the Inquisition itself.”†

In the year 1579 the foundations of the republic

* Magazine of the Ref. Dutch Church, vol. i., p. 354.

† Brodhead, p. 100.

were fairly laid in the union of the seven provinces formed at Utrecht. The motto "Eendragt maakt macht," "Union makes strength," was adopted. The provinces were driven to this union, and they found strength and glory in it. William, on accepting the office of Stadtholder, again confirmed the rights of conscience. Two years later (1581), allegiance to Spain was renounced, independence was formally declared, and Philip was deposed by the people. To appreciate this bold and noble step we must bear in mind the notions of the day in reference to the divine right of kings. The declaration of independence issued on this occasion, asserted republican principles far in advance of the common sentiment of the age. The following extract will suggest that it was not unknown to the illustrious men who in 1776 drafted our own.

"The States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands to all who shall see or read these presents, greeting: Whereas, it is notorious to every one that the prince of a country is established by God as a sovereign chief of his subjects to defend and preserve them from all injuries, oppressions, and violences, as a shepherd is ordained for the defense and protection of his flock: and that subjects are not created of God for the sake of the prince to be obedient to him in all that he commands, whether it be pious or impious, just or unjust, and to serve him as his slaves; but that the prince is made for the subjects, without whom he can not be prince, in order to govern them according to right and reason, and maintain and love them as a father his children, or a shepherd his flock, who risks

his person and life to defend and protect them.—And when he does not do this, but, instead of defending his subjects, seeks to oppress them and to deprive them of their privileges and ancient customs, and commands them, and uses them as slaves, he ought not to be deemed a prince, but a tyrant; and as such, his subjects, according to right and reason, can no longer recognize him as their prince, especially when this is done with deliberation, and by the authority of the States of the country; but they can abandon him, and without any impropriety choose another in his place as chief and lord to defend them. (The declaration then recites the conditions upon which the Dutch had remained in allegiance, and the grievances they had suffered from the Spanish government.)

“We, therefore, make it known that from the foregoing considerations, and pressed by extreme necessity as we have said, we have with one accord, deliberation, and consent, declared, and do declare, the king of Spain deposed *ipso jure* from his sovereignty, right, and heritage in these countries, and that we have no longer any intention of recognizing him in any thing touching the prince, or his sovereignty, jurisdiction, or domains in these Low Countries, and that we shall no longer use his name as sovereign, nor shall we permit any one thus to make use of it. For we have found this to be expedient for the good of the country. And to do this, and all that may result, we give to all those whom it may concern full power, authority, and special command. In witness whereof we have hereto

set our seal. Given at the Hague, in our Assembly, July 26, 1581."*

What conclusion in reference to the object and powers of government could be more clear and just than that to which the States of Holland arrived nearly three hundred years ago? What improvement has been made on it in this day of boasted progress of liberal principles? The adoption of such a paper well entitles Holland to the name that has been given her, "Mother of free States."

The new republic increased in strength and prosperity from day to day. Many of the Protestants came from Southern Netherlands, where the Reformation had been crushed, here to find an asylum for themselves, and to add strength to the republic. Many came from Germany, many from France. She rose rapidly to importance as a commercial nation, and in a few years became mistress of the sea. Even while fighting for her rights she was extending her trade to every land. Her merchantmen came home laden with the riches of the most distant countries. The arts and sciences, and literature were also cultivated. In every department of learning, divinity, law, politics, medicine, the fine arts, and military and naval science, the sons of Holland stood prominent in the seventeenth century. In divinity the names of Junius, Gomarus, Arminius, Cocceius are only specimens of a host. In political science who of their age excelled Oldenbarnevelt and the De Witts? In naval affairs what names occur more readily to the reader of history than those of Heems-

* Brodhead, Appendix, p. 760.

kerk, Tromp, and De Ruyter? If classical scholars be spoken of, we mention Scaliger, Heinsius. If philosophers, Grotius, Plancius, Spinoza. If physicians, Boerhaave, and Tulp. If historians, Brandt, De Laet, Van Meteren. If artists, Gerard Dow, Rembrandt, Vandervelde and Wouvermans. If poets, Cats and Vondel, the former "remarkable for purity of diction, felicity of description, and tenderness of sentiment," the latter "distinguished for the lofty fire of his imagination, the grandeur of his conceptions, and the vigor of his expression."*

The rights of conscience were sacredly guarded by the republic. The Calvinistic Reformed faith was the established national religion, but by its side every form of doctrine and worship was freely tolerated. The Romanist and the Lutheran were each in his own way permitted to worship God. The Jew, hunted as an outlaw in every country, was welcomed here. Holland became the place of refuge for those who in any part of Europe were oppressed on account of their religion. The Walloon churches were established by refugees from Belgium and France, and Scotch churches by the Presbyterians of Scotland. The Puritans of England dwelt at Leyden twelve years before they embarked for America. The Nonconformists of England, at the restoration of the Stuarts, found a resting-place in Holland. They simply exchanged places with Charles who had returned from exile to drive them into it. Amsterdam was reproached as a "common

* Davies, vol. ii., p. 667.

harbor of all opinions and of all heresies." Andrew Marvell wrote, in not very friendly rhyme,

"Hence Amsterdam, Turk, Christian, Pagan, Jew,
Staple of sects, and mint of schism grew.
That bank of conscience, where not one so strange
Opinion, but finds credit and exchange;
In vain for Catholics ourselves we bear,
The universal Church is only there."*

It was a day of great mourning for the republic when William of Orange was taken from its head. He was assassinated at Delft in 1584. As he fell, he exclaimed, "My God, my God, have mercy on my soul and on this unhappy people." The stadtholdership was conferred upon his son Maurice, a youth of seventeen, but a son worthy of such a sire. At first, the people were much disheartened, and the Spaniards improved the opportunity to recover much of what they had lost. But soon aid came from England, to the great joy of the people. The Earl of Leicester was sent by Queen Elizabeth with a body of troops. This, in the view of the pope, was a heinous crime on the part of Elizabeth, and he, in the exercise of his blasphemously-assumed function of prince of the kings of the earth, proceeded at once to depose her. The execution of the sentence he devolved on Philip who, as his obedient subject, fitted what he proudly called the "Invincible Armada," which was destroyed in sight of the shores of England.

Maurice proved himself an able statesman and successful general. His course was marked by a succes-

* Character of Holland.

sion of triumphs, until in 1609 a truce for twelve years was agreed upon with Spain. This was a period of rest for the Netherlands, well improved by the increase of her commerce and resources, and the strengthening of her institutions. Still it was marked by fearful internal troubles, by contentions in church and state, by the disputes between the Gomarists and Arminians, which resulted in the calling of the Synod of Dort, and the condemnation of the Arminian doctrines.

At the end of the truce, hostilities were resumed, but Spain was no longer formidable. Maurice died in 1625, and his brother Frederic Henry was elected Stadtholder of most of the provinces. Under his wise and excellent government great prosperity was enjoyed. Meanwhile Philip II. and also Philip III. had died, and in 1618 the independence of the United Provinces was formally acknowledged by Philip IV. Thus ended the contest. It had been carried on for nearly three generations by three successive tyrants of Spain, resisted by three successive princes of the House of Orange.

This history stands before the world. The reader will mark in it the hand of God, who defeateth the counsel of princes and scattereth their armies. In what a wonderful manner was the pride of Spain humbled—Spain, the proudest and at that time most powerful kingdom of Europe, by a people inhabiting reclaimed marshes—a country so destitute of natural resources, as to draw from other lands the bread for its people, and the very timber and stones for its dykes. This memorable struggle of weakness with power was con-

tinued for eighty years with untiring perseverance. Strange as it may seem, the people not only succeeded in the end, but grew during the strife, gathered strength while walking in the fires, so that long before their independence was acknowledged, they extorted the admiration of the world for their progress in art, science and literature, for the extent of their commerce, and their power by sea and by land. It was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

God, however, works by agencies, and it is exceedingly interesting to trace them. In this instance very many combined to bring about the result. It is curious to see how Philip mistook the character of the people, and the policy by which he should reach them. Persuaded that the suppression of heresy was but the work of a day, and that his father had failed only by excess of leniency, he adopted severer measures. This very course, so far from subduing the Protestants, roused the Catholics to become their allies.

Many of the causes of the success of the Dutch are fully traced in Davies' History of Holland, to which the reader is referred.* We can only glance at them. Much is to be attributed to the moral qualities of the people. Their known integrity, securing universal confidence, placed at their disposal the treasures of other nations. The advantage of this appeared in the promptness and vigor of their action, and in the contentment and spirit of their well-paid soldiery.

They were remarkably firm and persevering. Their long struggle with the ocean for ground to stand upon,

* Vol. ii., p. 653.

trained them to endurance in the contest for rights without which the soil would have been of little value. They looked with singleness of eye to the work before them, and would not be diverted by side issues, or drawn off by flattering temptations. They were not easily discouraged. "The goal which they had determined to reach did not change its position from day to day as whim, ambition, or circumstances dictated. In their deepest reverses, at their highest elevation of prosperity, it was still the same. They pursued their path toward it with slow and measured steps, and when at last they attained it, they suffered no disappointment, they experienced no reaction; they did not, as it too often happens in the bitterness of deceived hope, rush back to a condition worse than that they had left, but were content to find what they had sought, freedom and security; and riches, glory and honor were added to them."

They were quiet, unselfish patriots, seemingly careless of personal glory, but wrapped up in the cause of the country. Though freely offered, Spanish gold never could bribe one of them. The country was every thing, the individual nothing.

Their household economy enabled them, when it was needed, to pour millions into the exhausted national treasury. The highest officers of government, and military and naval commanders, lived in most modest and frugal style, and every housewife with zeal husbanded resources for a struggling country.

Their nation abounded in men of marked ability. The schooling through which it was passing could hard-

ly fail to train the intellect. Her statesmen and diplomatists took their stand by the side of the leading minds of the French, Spanish, and English governments.

Much was due to the navy. This early became the right arm of defense, and the naval commanders of the republic covered themselves with glory that has not yet faded.

The prevalent form of municipal government was of no small advantage. Every town in the confederacy was in a sense independent. Hence a blow in one quarter did not result in the destruction of the whole. Besides, the rights which the towns had gained by little and little from the earliest periods, were well known to the people, and they were accustomed to discuss and to guard them.

The geographical position and physical features of the country were favorable. Their harbors were dangerous to an ignorant enemy, but places of security to their own ships, brought in by their experienced pilots. The northern part of the country could only be traversed by an army in the winter, while all along their coast the sea was waiting, a ready ally more powerful than troops.

Holland was also greatly strengthened by the influx of multitudes of the best people from Southern Netherlands, France, Germany and England, who here found refuge from persecution, and had every motive to stand by and identify themselves with their protectors.

This contest was maintained for the world, and it is impossible to estimate how much the world owes to it. The opposition of Philip was to Protestantism, or what

he called heresy, not only in the Netherlands, but in England, France, everywhere. How much America owes to the firm maintenance of the rights of conscience there, who can tell? The Pilgrim fathers have been covered with glory by their descendants, and justly. But surely it is not treason to them to do justice to others. It is not to be denied that to Holland belongs the glory of having been the first of modern nations to guaranty the rights of conscience in matters of religion. These rights have ever been claimed by oppressed individuals, and contended for by oppressed bodies of men. They were claimed by Daniel and his associates in Babylon and by the primitive martyrs. So the Waldenses, the Huguenots, and Puritans contended for these rights, but where was the government or party in power to concede them? Nay, the weak who had fought for these rights, and secured them for themselves, were ready to deny them to others, and the oppressed became oppressors. In England, the Papist, the High Churchman, and the Puritan, by turns suffered, and made others suffer. The Puritan in the New World, to which he came to enjoy liberty of conscience, denied it to the Baptist and Quaker, and sorry we are to confess that one governor of New Netherlands followed their example, when without authority he annoyed the Lutheran, Independent, and Quaker. Nay, Holland once was derelict to her own principles, though under palliating circumstances, when she banished the Arminian preachers. That exceptional case has attracted particular notice from the very fact that there was a constitutional guaranty of the rights of

conscience. And surely the dwelling together of Jew and Romanist, Lutheran and Calvinist, each worshipping in his own way, was proof that it was by no means a dead letter.

At Leyden, the Hollander and the Puritan dwelt in Christian fellowship; the one the protector, the other the protected. The twelve years spent there in security by the latter, were surely not spent in vain. Nor is it to be supposed that nothing was there learned by the ancestors of a proverbially shrewd people. From that place of his retreat the Puritan came hither and planted his colony at Plymouth Rock, while the Hollander brought his institutions to New Netherlands. We gratefully acknowledge the agency of both in laying the foundation of our institutions; we sturdily deny a monopoly of praise to either. All of good, that we possess, did not come out of the cabin of the Mayflower, but Providence gathered choice materials from the various nations of Europe, and brought them to these western shores for the erection of a temple to His praise.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARMINIAN CONTROVERSY.

IN the early part of the seventeenth century, the United Provinces assumed a new and glorious position before the nations of Europe. These had, with various interest, looked upon their protracted contest with Spain, expecting every year to witness the end of it in their ruin. But now the pride of Spain was humbled, and in the year 1609, a truce or cessation of hostilities for twelve years was agreed upon, under conditions very favorable to the Dutch. From this time alliances with the Provinces were courted by powerful nations. By means of the East India Company, a most extensive and lucrative trade was carried on with the east, and the supremacy of the Dutch was established in the Asiatic seas. Encouraged by this success, the States General organized a West India company, with enormous powers, to form colonies among the natives of the New World, and to trade with them. By this company, settlements were made in various parts, and among them that at the mouth of the Hudson River, where the foundation of New Amsterdam was laid.

The enemies of the republic, however, had predicted that just as soon as contention with the enemy

should cease, domestic dissensions would arise. These malicious predictions were sadly fulfilled. Serious divisions arose in church and in state. The brilliant military exploits of Maurice had gained him unbounded influence with the army and the people. He was now Stadtholder of five provinces, and in a most favorable position to prosecute any ambitious designs that he might entertain. John Oldenbarneveldt, the celebrated advocate of the Province of Holland, looked with a jealous eye on Maurice; imputed to him the design of overthrowing the constitution, and of grasping after absolute power. He devoted himself to the work of curbing the prince, and guarding the authority and prerogatives of the States General.

Oldenbarneveldt was a man, concerning whose extraordinary abilities there can be only one opinion. He was a most accomplished statesman who for a long time had the management of foreign affairs, and did his country signal service. By his skillful management, the cautionary towns which the English had long held as security for moneys loaned, were redeemed on most liberal terms. Maurice was not unconscious of his extended influence, and finding it constantly to oppose his wishes, became exceedingly impatient of it. There arose "a mutual antipathy which soon deepened on the side of the Stadtholder into a sentiment of intense animosity against Oldenbarneveldt, and which the sacrifice of its hated object at length could scarcely appease."*

It is difficult, at this point of time, to say which de-

* Brodhead, p. 108.

serves the greater blame. The weaker party that is obliged to succumb in the end usually gets the sympathy of posterity. Hence most writers favor Oldenbarneveldt who lost his life on the scaffold. But it is hard to deny that both were true patriots—Maurice who so freely shed his blood for his country, and Oldenbarneveldt who with untiring zeal labored for her in council.

Closely interwoven with the political difficulties of this period was the Arminian controversy. Here again the subdued party has to a great extent received the sympathy of posterity. Most writers on this subject, indeed, have been far from concealing that they are favorable to the Arminian party. The candid examiner of facts will undoubtedly discover faults in temper and measures on both sides, and will probably be inclined to make a pretty equal distribution of them. This, however, does not affect the question of truth in regard to the controverted points, nor the reasonableness of the call for a National Synod, which was pressed by the opponents of Arminius.*

It is necessary that the ground of the controversy be clearly understood. It has been stated that from the commencement of the Reformation to the Synod of Dort, there was no uniformity of doctrine required

* History of Events preceding the Call of the Synod of Dort, published by authority of the States General, and translated by Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D. *Acta Synodi Dordracensis*—Brandt's "Reformation in the Low Countries," and Vanderkemp's "Schets Dordesche Synode," have furnished most of the materials for this chapter.

of the churches in the Netherlands, but that afterward young preachers came into the country, from the school of Calvin and Beza, who taught their peculiar doctrines on predestination, and endeavored to impose them upon their brethren who on this subject had, for the most part, adopted the moderate sentiments of Melancthon.*

This is a very unfair statement. The opinions of Calvin and Beza were never referred to in the controversy. The fact is, that the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, though Calvinistic in doctrine, yet never acknowledged Calvin as master, but appealed to the Word of God. The charge against Arminius and his followers was, not that they taught doctrines opposed to those of Calvin, but to those of the Word of God as exhibited in the Confession of Faith and Heidelberg Catechism, which were acknowledged standards in the Church. It is true that at first, and for more than forty years, while the churches could not appear publicly, there was no written and signed confession adopted by ecclesiastical authority. But, even then, there was a standard of doctrine no less real, and well-known among the Reformed, than if it had been written, and after the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism appeared, they were adopted as standards by the earliest synods, and had been held as such almost forty years before Arminius taught his peculiar views. The charge against him was that he taught doctrines contrary to those standards of the Church, to which, as a minister in it, he had subscribed.

* *Memoirs of Episcopius*, p. 23.

In the year 1602, one of the professorships of theology in the University of Leyden became vacant by the death of Junius. Jacobus Arminius was at this time a pastor in Amsterdam. His orthodoxy had there been called in question by the consistory, and they had stayed further proceedings on his declaration that he agreed with the confession and catechism, and received the doctrines contained in them, as they were commonly understood in the Church. When, shortly after, he was called to the vacant chair at Leyden, this consistory, as well as the deputies of the synod, opposed his appointment. At a conference held with Gomarus, one of the professors, and in presence of the deputies, and also of the curators of the university, he anew professed his adherence to the standards, and promised that he would teach nothing at variance with the received doctrines of the Church. On these professions his nomination was confirmed, and he was inducted by Gomarus himself.

For some time he refrained from advancing any thing in public contrary to these doctrines. In a year or two, he began craftily to instill into the minds of his pupils the sentiments on account of which he had been admonished at Amsterdam. Soon he was emboldened to proclaim them more publicly, though in ambiguous language. This led Gomarus to make a public, clear explanation of the received doctrine. The consistory of Leyden and the synodal deputies saw that there was a difference between the views of the two professors, and invited Arminius to a friendly conference. This he declined, and renewed the professions previously

made, which professions were again relied upon, and time was allowed him to prove his sincerity.

But the controversy, so far from being stayed, became an open one. It spread from the students to the ministers, and so to the people. It became evident that measures must speedily be taken for its settlement. The Classis of Dordrecht brought the matter before the Synod of South Holland, which resolved to inquire into these difficulties, but their deputies were put off by the curators of the university, under the plea that a national Synod would soon be called which would settle them. A petition for such a Synod was presented to the States General, who replied that authority had already been given for the calling of a Synod, which was indeed true, but connected with it was a condition to which the churches could not assent. It was expressly required that the confession of faith and the catechism should be revised by the Synod. This condition was craftily introduced by the states of Holland, and by it the calling of a Synod was defeated from year to year. The states of Holland had long labored to destroy the independence of the Church, and to make it completely subservient to state policy. It was now sought to make these doctrinal difficulties subservient to this long-cherished end. The states sided with the party which they supposed would increase their own power, and weaken that of the Church. Hence the unauthorized and unacceptable condition on which alone they would consent to the call for a national Synod; hence the command in 1608, that preachers should make their sentiments in

regard to the standards known not to the classes, but to the "Committed Council;" hence the suspension of the annual Synod; hence the favorable reception of the remonstrance of the Arminians; hence the order to classes not to examine ministers and candidates on the disputed points, but to tolerate both views; hence the various measures infringing on the rights of the Church, ending with the adoption of an ambiguous and objectionable formulary of faith to be a rule for the guidance of consistories and classes under pain of severe penalties.*

The beginning of open direct antagonism of the state to the Church, was seen in bold interference with her discipline. The synods and classes deeming that the times demanded that all the ministers should be required to subscribe to the confession and catechism, which in some cases had been neglected, passed a resolution to that effect. Five of the ministers of the Classis of Alekmar with Venator, a man unsound in doctrine and immoral in life, at their head, refused to do it. They were consequently suspended from office. They appealed to the states of Holland, and thus the first resort to the civil authorities was made by the Arminian party. This started a controversy in reference to the authority of the state in ecclesiastical matters, not unlike that which a few years ago resulted in Scotland in the coming out of the Free Church from the Establishment. The states flattered by this acknowledgment of their authority, and feeling that its exercise would go far to confirm and perpetuate it,

* Vanderkemp's "Schets der Dordsehe Synode," p. 17.

ordered the classis to restore the suspended ministers. This was refused on the ground that it was a purely ecclesiastical matter, with which the states had no right to meddle, and in this refusal the classis was sustained by the Synod of North Holland.

The death of Arminius, which occurred in 1609, did not put an end to the controversy. It was still maintained with much bitterness. His followers soon after adopted a remonstrance which was sent to the states, and from which they received the name of Remonstrants, whereby they are known in history. In this document they professed to give their views on the disputed points; they complained of the treatment they had received in their classes, and asked for the protection of their persons and opinions against all Church censures. They exhibited their sentiments under the five heads of 1. Predestination. 2. Redemption by the death of Christ. 3. Man's corruption. 4. God's grace in conversion. 5. Perseverance of the saints. Their opposition to the received doctrines was manifest—and the variations none could fail to see were great, though they contended that they were insignificant. To this remonstrance the opposite party replied in a paper, from which they were called Contraremonstrants.

The curators of the University of Leyden nominated Conradus Vorstius to be the successor of Arminius. He was more than suspected of Socinianism. His nomination was favored by the Remonstrants, who declared that they found nothing objectionable in his writings. This led their opponents to conclude that

they had a covert design of going further than they professed, and of breaking up even the foundations of the faith; an opinion in which they were confirmed by noticing the intimacy of some of them with men of loose principles. Much excitement was created by the nomination of Vorstius, and even James of England protested against it. The result was the appointment of Simon Episcopus to the professorship.

Separations and disturbances now began to take place in various parts of the country. At Rotterdam, Geselius, one of the Contra-remonstrant ministers, was expelled from the city by the magistracy. Thus the Remonstrants were the first to use the "coercive force of the civil power of which they afterward so bitterly complained when turned against themselves."* That "coercive force" was employed in almost every town, and riots broke out in many places. This led the states of Holland unwisely to pass what was called the "Severe Edict," in which they proclaimed their opposition to a national Synod, and authorized the levy of *waardgelders*, or militia, for the defense of the towns. This action only increased the unhappy disturbances.

Maurice at last felt called upon to interpose, as far as he had a right to do so. He has been reproached for placing himself at the head of one of the parties, and of using arbitrary and unscrupulous measures against the other. Nothing can be more evident, however, than the facts that down to 1617, he did not appear prominently in the controversy, and that the first measures he employed were of the mildest character.

* Davies, ii., 465.

In that year, a part of the congregation at the Hague, with Roseus, one of the pastors, separated from the Remonstrant pastor, the distinguished Uytenbogard, and established worship by themselves. Maurice was now called upon by Oldenbarneveldt to interpose, which was an evident acknowledgment of his right and duty to do so. He was even rebuked by him for the lack of zeal he had hitherto manifested—a decisive refutation of the charge that he was a warm partisan through the whole controversy. Maurice thereupon referred to his oath, by which he had sworn to protect the Reformed religion, and declared that he would protect it; that a national Synod ought to be called, and that the Contra-remonstrants ought to be allowed to worship separately without losing the privileges of members of the national Church. He himself worshiped with the Separatists at the Hague, and urged the states to grant the petition for the calling of a Synod without delay. In the towns, also, where lawless, high-handed measures had been pursued, he used his authority to secure changes in the municipal government. That it was to some extent arbitrarily exercised may well be admitted without allowing the truth of the wholesale charge that to secure his own ends he trampled the rights of all these towns under foot.*

Into all the details of the history we can not enter. We recall attention to the relative positions of the two parties. The Contra-remonstrants urged the calling of a national Synod as the only body that could lawfully decide whether the new teachings were according

* Vanderkemp, p. 26.

to the standards of the established Church. The Remonstrants, on the other hand, dreaded nothing more than the calling of such a Synod, and as they were favored by the civil authorities, it was postponed from year to year. The Remonstrants insisted that the revision of the standards should be specified in the call for a Synod as a prominent reason for such call. The Contra-remonstrants said that they were not opposed to such revision, but deemed it, for manifest reasons, unwise to put it into the call for the Synod. The Remonstrants labored to create the impression that the points in dispute were not important, but that both views might be taught in the Church with mutual toleration, while the Contra-remonstrants contended that vital doctrines were assailed. When the Remonstrants found that a Synod must be called, they proposed that in order to secure an impartial judgment its members should be appointed by the States General, and not by the Church in her regular way, according to her government and discipline. This of course could not be. They also talked continually of pacific measures: "Measures which," as has been well remarked "the weaker party always so strongly insist on, and which they are so seldom found to practice, when by a change of circumstances they become the stronger."*

A Synod was at length called by the authority of the States General, and met at Dordrecht on the 13th of November 1618, and its sessions extended over a period of more than six months. From the churches of the United Provinces thirty-five ministers, and

* Davies ii., 483.

twenty elders were present as delegates, and also five professors of theology from the five schools of Leyden, Franeker, Groningen, Harderwyck, and Middleburg. There were also twenty-seven delegates present from the foreign churches of Great Britain, the Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Geneva, Bremen, East Friesland, and Nassau. The delegates from the French churches were forbidden by the king to attend. Eighteen political commissioners deputed by the States General were present to watch the proceedings. The learning and integrity of the members of this Synod can not be questioned. Among them we find the names of Polyander, Lubberti, Waleus, Faulkelius, Damman, Hommius, Trigland, Voetius, Scultetus. At the head of the English deputation was George Carleton, Bishop of Llandaff. Connected with him were Joseph Hall, dean of Worcester, Samuel Ward, archdeacon of Taunton, John Davenant, professor of theology at Cambridge. Walter Balcanhall represented the Church of Scotland.

Johannes Bogerman, pastor of the Church of Leeuwarden, was chosen president. The proceedings were conducted in Latin. The members were sworn to refer all questions of doctrine to the Word of God for decision. Thirteen of the Remonstrant ministers were cited to appear. These immediately, through their spokesman Episcopius, attempted to justify themselves, and endeavored to turn the Synod from an ecclesiastical court into a conference for the interchange of opinions, denying also that its members were lawful and impartial judges. Having stated their views, which they

finally consented to do, they declined to give such further explanations as were sought in order to obtain a clear understanding of them. The Synod, wearied at last by their evasions and pertinacity, with the concurrence of the States General summarily expelled them from the house. In this act there may have been harshness, but it was undoubtedly provoked by contumacy. The foreign delegates seem to have disapproved of the expulsion of the accused ministers.

The Synod now proceeded to examine the doctrines of the Remonstrants as contained in their writings. The dismissed ministers complied with the request to communicate their sentiments in writing. The result of the examination was the judgment that they were neither according to the Scriptures nor the confession of faith. The canons which expressed the sentiments of the Synod on the controverted five heads of doctrine were now framed, discussed, modified, and finally adopted with entire unanimity. They will be more fully noticed hereafter. We can only say now that we have often read them, and always with increased admiration of their clear, beautiful and scriptural statements on these points. They contain not high, but moderate Calvinism. With us, the question, who were the more blamable in this controversy, is of little importance, in comparison with the question whether the conclusions arrived at are in accordance with the Divine Word.

The Heidelberg Catechism and the confession of faith were reviewed and confirmed, and it was resolved that henceforth all candidates for the ministry and all

schoolmasters should subscribe them. Measures were also taken for a new version of the Scriptures in the Dutch language to be made directly from the original tongues. The work was committed to a number of learned divines, who after the labor of eighteen years produced a translation singularly faithful, and in every respect excellent, and accompanied with most valuable annotations.* The rules of church government which had been adopted by previous Synods were also reviewed and reduced to a more complete system.

Judgment was passed on the cited ministers. "They were pronounced innovators and disturbers of the Church and nation; obstinate and rebellious; leaders of faction; teachers of false doctrine and workers of schism, and deprived of their offices, both ecclesiastical and academical, till such time as they had satisfied the churches with evident signs of repentance."†

Thus ended this famous Synod, whose "marvelous labors" the President Bogerman declared in his closing address, "had made hell tremble." Some men have been unable to find words strong enough to express their abhorrence of the members and acts of this Synod, while others have declared that the Church of Holland stood at the head of the Churches of Christendom, when at Dordrecht, she bore the most complete and glorious testimony to the grace of Jesus Christ, that man has ever been vouchsafed to bear.‡ When the

* T. D. W. in *Christian Intelligencer*, Nov. 11, 1852.

† Davies, ii., 509.

‡ "Quand est-ce que l'Église de Hollande a été triomphante, glorieuse? Quand a-t-elle marché à la tête de toutes les Églises de la Chrétienté? C'est lorsqu'il lui fut donné de porter dans les murs de

spirit that prevailed in this Synod, is brought into question, some regard is due to the opinion of Bishop Hall, who, in his valedictory address to the Synod, declared that no place on earth could be more like heaven; that there was none in which he would rather dwell, or the remembrance of which could afford so great delight.*

The states confirmed the judgment of the Synod: forbade all assemblies of the Remonstrants, fined such as attended them; offered rewards for the apprehension of their preachers; and, in short, refused them such rights as were granted to other sects, and even to infidels. Many of the deposed ministers were banished. In all this, we see the republic departing from her own principles, hitherto so gloriously illustrated. Yet, we must remember that the case was peculiar. There was a legal union between Church and State, and no one questioned the right and duty of the latter to carry the decrees of the former into effect. We must also remember, that the Synod was justifiable in silencing those who taught contrary to the received doctrines. As soon as the Arminians found that they could not conscientiously preach the doctrines of the Church, they should at once have withdrawn, and as a separate party or new sect, they would have been

Dordrecht le plus complet, le plus magnifique témoignage qu'il ait jamais été permis aux hommes de rendre à la grâce de Jésus-Christ."—Merle D'Aubigne, cited by Vanderkemp.

* "Neque enim ullus est profectò sub cælo locus æque cæli æmulus et in quo tentorium mihi nã maluerim cujusque adeò gestiet mihi animus meminisse. Beatos verò vos quibus, hõc frui datum!"—Hall's Works, vol. xii., p. 344.

tolerated. Instead of this, they endeavored to remain in the Church, and there propagate their views. The contentions of years exasperated both parties, so that in the hour of victory toleration was forgotten.

It is pleasing to find that, when Frederic Henry became Stadtholder, the banished preachers were recalled. They established churches, and founded a divinity school of considerable reputation at Amsterdam. They have, as a small sect, continued in the Netherlands to the present day, while their doctrines have been widely spread in Protestant churches, and been received by not a few of the ministers and members of the national Church of the Netherlands.

The history of the call and acts of this Synod is important, because by it the doctrinal standards of the Church were completed and settled. From that day to this the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dort have been the accepted symbols of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. These are the standards which she sent with her children to the New World, and which have been retained by the Reformed Dutch Church of America without alteration.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA UNTIL THE SURRENDER OF NEW AMSTERDAM TO THE ENGLISH, A. D. 1664.

ON the 11th of September, 1609, the Half-Moon, a vessel of eighty tons burden, commanded by Hendrick Hudson, passed through the narrows and anchored in New York harbor. Hudson came under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company to seek for a north-western passage to the East Indies. He sailed to where Albany is now situated, and found that he could proceed no further. Soon other vessels were sent out, and trading posts were established at Fort Orange, now Albany, and on the island of Manhattan, now New York, in the year 1614, six years before the landing of the pilgrims at Plymouth. In 1623 the first permanent agricultural colony was established in New Netherlands. The object of the colonists was trade. It is true, as has been said of them, that they came not for conscience' sake, and as fugitives from oppression. How could they? Holland was the land of the free.

But they had a care and zeal for the Church, and provision was made as soon as practicable for the public worship of God, according to the custom of the Fatherland. They did not at once bring with them an

ordained minister, but were very soon supplied with two "krank-besoeckers" or "comforters of the sick," officers of the Church of Holland, whose duty it was to visit the sick, and pray with them. These were Sebastian Jansen Krol, and Jan Huyck. They met the people on Sundays in an upper room above a horse-mill, and read the Scriptures and the creeds to them. This was the beginning of public worship in New Amsterdam.*

Early in the spring of 1633, the first minister, Everardus Bogardus, came to New Amsterdam, bearing the title of "Dominie," which was familiarly given to the ministers in Holland. He was accompanied by Adam Roelandsen, the first schoolmaster, for among the Dutch the church and school went together. At what time the church was organized in New Amsterdam, is uncertain, but there are now in existence regularly kept records dating back to 1639.†

Dominie Bogardus married Annetje Jansen, the widow of Roelof Jansen who had been assistant superintendent of farms at Rennselaerswyck, now Albany, and from whom the creek called Roelof Jansen's Kill, running through Columbia county and emptying into

* Brodhead, page 165.—Documentary History of New York, vol. iii., p. 27.

† "Among the manuscripts of Dr. Livingston there is one containing a few observations upon the Dutch Church, in which he says: 'Documents of a private nature render it certain that a considerable church was organized in that city as early as 1619.' In another he affirms that a document is still extant, containing the names of members in full communion of the church of New York, dated 1622."—Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston, note, p. 79.

the Hudson near Redhook, derived its name. He obtained a grant of sixty-two acres of land on Manhattan Island, lying north-west from the fort, and north of the present Warren street. This is the valuable property belonging now to the corporation of Trinity church, and to which the ten thousand heirs of Annetje Jansen are still laying claim, on the ground of some defect in the conveyance.*

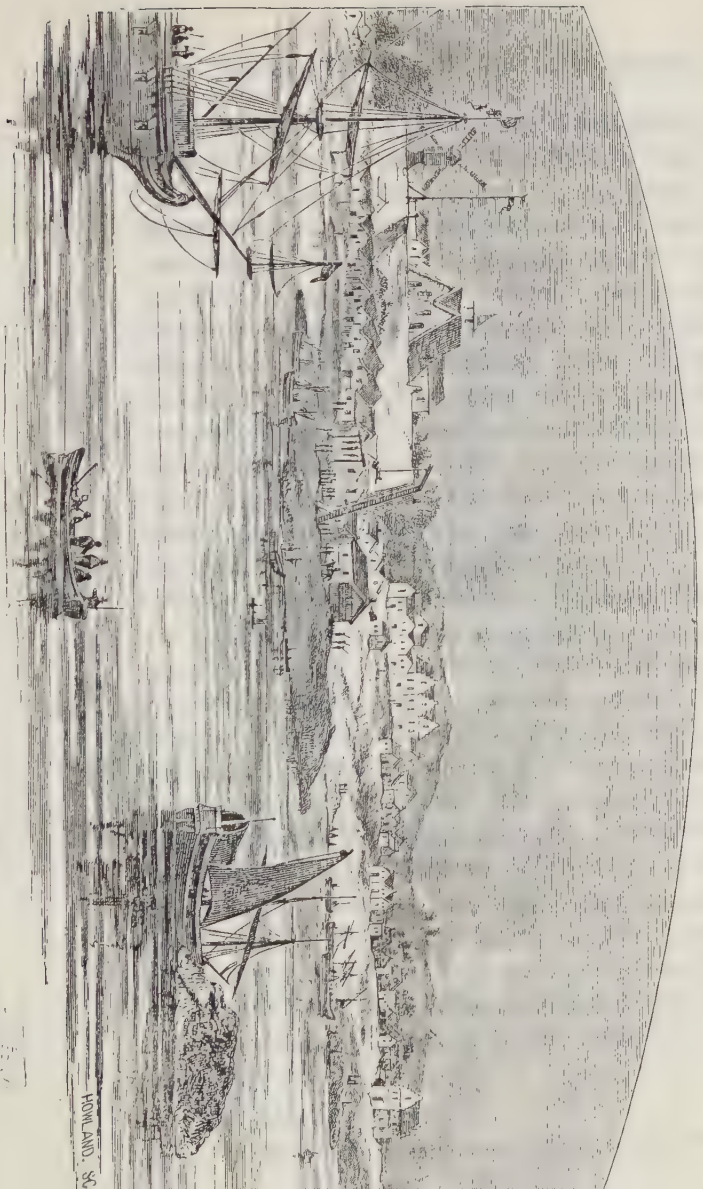
On account of the rapid increase of the colony, it was soon thought necessary to have another place of worship. A plain wooden building was put up near the East River, in what is now Broad street, between Pearl and Bridge streets, and near it a dwelling house and stable were put up for the minister, for it was the universal custom of the Dutch of the olden time to have a house for the pastor as soon as they had a church.

There is little on record about the ministry of Bogardus. It does not seem to have been a very happy or successful one. Difficulties of some sort arose between him and Directors Von Twiller and Kieft, and he thundered at them from the pulpit in pointed and not always very refined language. His difficulty with Kieft produced some trouble in the congregation. In 1647 he resigned, and sailed for Holland. Kieft was his fellow-passenger. The vessel was wrecked on the coast of Wales, and both, together with eighty others, perished.†

The old church having become dilapidated, a new one was built, under Kieft's administration, in the year

* Brodhead, p. 265.

† Brodhead, p. 472. Doc. Hist., iv., 70.



HOWLAND, SC.

New-Amsterdam, (now New-York,) A.D. 1656.

1642, within the walls of Fort Amsterdam, which stood on what is now called the Battery. De Vries* gives us a humorous account of the origin of it. Dining with the director one day, he told him that it was a shame that when the English came to Manhattan they should see only "a mean barn in which we preached. The first thing they built in New England, after their dwelling-houses, was a fine church; we should do the like; we have fine oak-wood, good mountain-stone, and excellent lime which we burn from oyster-shells, much better than our lime in Holland." The proposal took at once with the director, a subscription was headed by him, and church-masters were appointed to superintend the work.

This church was seventy-two feet long, fifty wide, and sixteen high, and cost 2,500 guilders. The congregation worshiped in it until the opening of the church in Garden street in 1693. After the surrender of the colony to the English in 1664, the consistory granted the use of it, when not occupied by themselves, to the English military chaplains. Afterward, Rev. Mr. Vesey the first rector of Trinity parish, occupied it for one service on the Sabbath. When the church in Garden street was opened, the Dutch congregation abandoned the church in the fort. It then became the property of the government, took the name of King's chapel, and continued to be used for worship by the chaplains of the garrison until 1741, when it was destroyed by fire.†

* Quoted by Brodhead, p. 335.

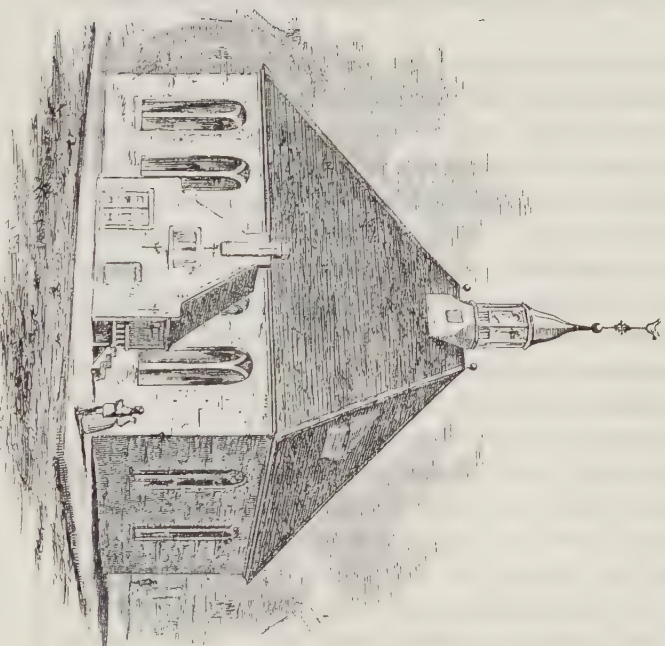
† T. D. W. in the Christian Intelligencer, Dec. 2, 1852.

In 1630, Kiliaen Van Rennselaer, who was a polisher of pearls and diamonds, bought a tract of land around Fort Orange, now Albany, and planted the colony of Rennselaerswyck, over which he was acknowledged patroon.* In 1642, he secured the services of a learned clergyman, Dr. Johannis Megapolensis, guarantied him a salary, and sent him out to his colony. On his arrival a parsonage was bought for him, and in the following year a church was built, a little to the west of the patroon's trading-house. The colony, at this time, contained about one hundred persons. This first church in Albany was thirty-four feet long and nineteen wide, had a canopied pulpit, pews for the magistrates and deacons, and nine benches for the people. It was located in a pine grove, near the present Church street, and accommodated the congregation until the year 1656. At that time a new church was commenced, where State and Market streets now intersect each other. An oaken pulpit was procured from Holland for which the people subscribed twenty-five beavers, worth two hundred guilders, the Amsterdam chamber added seventy-five, and also presented the congregation with a bell.†

The third church was erected in 1715. It was built around the walls of the old one, which in the mean time continued to be occupied for worship, and was removed on the completion of the new building. Public worship was suspended only three Sundays. The coats

* A patroon was a feudal chief of territory colonized by him, under prescribed conditions. For an account of these conditions, see Brodhead, p. 194.

† Brodhead pp. 342, 374, 624.



1st Reformed Dutch Church, Albany, Corner of State, Market,
and Court Streets.

Erected A.D. 1715. Demolished 1906.

of arms of the old Dutch families of Albany were painted on the windows of this church, and remained there until its demolition in 1806. The old, octagonal oak pulpit, which came from Holland, and a fragment of the little bell, bearing the inscription "Anno 1601" are still preserved.*

Megapolensis seems to have been a most worthy and zealous minister. It is claimed that he was the first Protestant preacher to the Indians. He took great interest in those children of the forest, who came to the fort to trade, and he wrote a treatise about the Mohawks which was published in Holland. He learned their language and preached Christ to them three or four years before Eliot began his labors among the Indians in the vicinity of Boston. After he had served the church at Albany six years, he obtained permission to return to the Fatherland. Backerus, the minister at New Amsterdam at that time, also obtained permission to return, and actually sailed. When Megapolensis reached New Amsterdam, where he was to embark, Director Stuyvesant persuaded him to remain, so that the province should not be left entirely without a ministry and ordinances. He especially urged this fact that "children were every Sunday presented for baptism, sometimes one, sometimes two, yea, sometimes three and four together." Megapolensis yielded, and became minister of New Amsterdam in the place of Backerus.†

* Brodhead, p. 625.

† T. D. W. in *Christian Intelligencer*, Dec. 2, 1852. Brodhead, pp. 375, 508.

After Megapolensis had left Albany, his son-in-law, Dominie Grassmere, came to that place, and preached with acceptance, although he was under censure of the Classis of Alckmaar. He remained about two years, and then returned to Holland, to apply for an appointment to New Amsterdam, in which he did not succeed.* Instead of this, two ministers were sent out in 1652, Samuel Drisius and Gideon Schaats. Drisius was a man of much learning, and able to preach in Dutch, French and English. He was appointed colleague of Megapolensis at New Amsterdam, and occasionally preached in French to the Huguenots, who had settled on Staten Island.† He labored here until his death, which occurred in 1681, a period of twenty-nine years. Schaats had been a schoolmaster, who received ordination and was sent out to Rennselaerswyck. It was particularly required of him to "use all Christian zeal to bring up both the heathen and their children in the Christian religion." His ministry continued forty-two years with some interruption, occasioned by trouble in the congregation.‡

* Brodhead, p. 516-522.

† French Protestants formed a most important element in the population of New Netherlands. The first company of permanent settlers was composed principally of Walloons. The French formed after the Dutch "the richest and most considerable part of the population." They speedily identified themselves with the Dutch, adopted their language, and worshiped in their churches, though in the city they had a church of their own. They located in New Amsterdam, at New Rochelle, on Long Island, Staten Island, in New Jersey, at New Paltz, and their names are now borne by numerous and respectable families of their descendants.

‡ Brodhead, p. 537.

Thus far we find two churches in New Netherlands, one at New Amsterdam, the other at Rennselaerswyck. In 1654, a third was established at Midwout, the present Flatbush, on Long Island. The people on Long Island had thus far been compelled to travel miles, and then cross the East River to attend public worship. The ministers occasionally went over and preached in private houses. The want of a settled minister was so deeply felt, that a committee was sent over from New Amsterdam, to effect a church organization. Provisionally, just at this time, Dominie Johannis Theodorus Polhemus arrived from Itamarca in Brazil, where he had been stationed, and was immediately employed to preach to the new congregation, till he should receive a regular appointment from Holland. The people engaged to support him independently of the West India Company. A church was immediately built in which he preached every Sunday morning, while in the afternoon he preached at Breuckelen and New Amersfoort, now Flatlands, alternately.*

Thus far there was no municipal government in New Amsterdam. The colony was governed by the Director and Council, who were appointed by the West India Company in Holland. The neighboring settlements enjoyed municipal privileges, according to the Holland system, long before this. The earnest prayer of the people was at last granted, and in 1652 it was ordered that New Amsterdam should be organized so as to resemble Old Amsterdam as much as possible. Burgomasters and all the other municipal officers

* Brodhead, p. 581.

were appointed, and record books were opened. The first entry made was of a solemn prayer for a blessing on their undertaking.* This government had less of the elements of popular liberty than the governments of most of the towns of Holland. Too much power was left in the hands of the Director. And yet it has been said that whatever was known of popular liberty in New Netherlands was learned from the emigrants who came thither from New England. How strange this assertion in face of the fact that the people had long earnestly pleaded not for a new thing, but for privileges such as they had enjoyed in their native towns across the waters, where legally qualified persons always had a voice in the selection of the magistrates.

We now come to a part of the history which it is not pleasant to review—the history of persecuting measures against non-conforming sects. In New Netherlands as in Holland, at first all were allowed to enjoy their own opinions without hinderance. New Amsterdam became, like Old Amsterdam, a general asylum for the oppressed from every quarter. Francis Doughty, a dissenting minister, being harshly used in Massachusetts, early came to New Netherlands, and a grant of land, with many privileges, was given him at Mispeth, now Newtown, L. I. Mr. Throemorton, driven from Massachusetts with Roger Williams, came with his friends to Westchester. Lady Moody, excommunicated in New England, settled at Gravesend, L. I. She and

* A translation of this prayer may be seen in "Valentine's History of New York."

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth, struggle, and achievement. From the first European settlements to the present day, the nation has evolved through a series of challenges and triumphs. The early years were marked by the struggle for independence from British rule, a fight that culminated in the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The new nation then faced the task of building a government that could unite the diverse peoples of the continent. The Constitution, drafted in 1787, provided the framework for a federal system of government, balancing the powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The years following the Revolution were a period of rapid expansion and development. The nation's territory grew as it acquired new lands, and its economy flourished through trade and industry. However, the path of progress was not without obstacles. The struggle for slavery, in particular, became a defining issue of the early 19th century. The debate over whether to admit new states as free or slave territories led to a series of compromises and conflicts, ultimately culminating in the Civil War. The war, fought between 1861 and 1865, was a pivotal moment in American history. It resulted in the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery, but it also left a deep scars on the nation. The Reconstruction period that followed was a time of great challenge and uncertainty. The goal was to rebuild the South and integrate the freed slaves into the fabric of the nation. However, the process was slow and often met with resistance. The struggle for civil rights continued for decades, with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s playing a central role. The nation's history is a testament to the resilience and spirit of its people. Despite the many challenges it has faced, the United States has emerged as a global leader, a nation of innovation and progress. The story of the United States is not just a story of the past; it is a story that continues to shape the future.

her friends were Mennonists, denying infant baptism, and the institutions of the Sabbath and the ministry. There were also at different places some Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists. These all dwelt in peace until jealousies were excited, and Stuyvesant, as a defender of the Church, issued a proclamation against all who should "hold conventicles not in harmony with the established religion." Heavy fines were exacted from all who transgressed. The West India Company being appealed to, rebuked Stuyvesant for his intolerance, and commanded him "to allow to all the free exercise of religion in their own houses."*

The Lutherans in New Amsterdam had, in 1654, asked permission of Director Stuyvesant, to have a minister of their own and public worship, but their petition was denied. In 1657 the Lutheran congregation of Amsterdam sent over a minister, John Ernestus Goetwater, without consulting the classis or the Company. His arrival created great excitement, and he was at once ordered to return; but this order was, on account of his ill health, not enforced. The West India Company feeling, no doubt, that due respect had not been paid to them, approved of what was done in this case, though they thought it "might have been performed in a more gentle way." Their desire and policy were to draw the Lutherans into the Reformed Church. The chief objection, on the part of the Lutherans, was to the formulary used in baptism. The Directors, therefore, sent orders to the ministers not to be too precise in this matter, but to use the old formulary

* Brodhead, p. 617.

which had been framed in Reformation times, and which would satisfy the Lutherans. The ministers sent back a letter in which they defended their course, and asked for help in the ministry.*

The Quakers also, who, driven from New England, came hither to find rest, were subjected to various annoyances and persecutions.

In reviewing all these proceedings, it is but just to say that persecution did not occur under any one of the four governors who preceded Stuyvesant, and that under his administration the municipal government of New Amsterdam had nothing to do with it. It was the work of the provincial government, which was composed of the Director and Council, and entirely separated from the city government. The people had no voice in this. Moreover, all intolerant measures soon ceased by order of the Directors of the West India Company, so that neither these directors nor the people, nor the popular municipal government were responsible for these departures from the Holland principle of toleration. "It is our opinion," wrote the directors to Stuyvesant, "that at least the consciences of men ought to remain free and unshackled. Let every one remain free as long as he is modest, moderate, his political conduct irreproachable, and as long as he does not offend others, or oppose the government. This maxim of moderation has always been the guide of our magistrates in this city (Amsterdam),

* Brodhead, p. 642. Letter of Drisius and Megapolensis. Documentary History of New York, vol. III. p. 69. The Lutherans scrupled at the inquiry, "if they believe that the doctrine which is preached in that congregation, in unison with the Synod of Dort, is the true one."—Albany Records, Translations, vol. iv. p. 267.

and the consequence has been that people have flocked from every land to this asylum. Tread thus in their steps, and we doubt not you will be blessed.”*

The earnest request that more ministers might be supplied to meet the growing wants of the province, was favorably answered by the directors. In 1660 two were sent out. One was Hermanus Blom, who came with a wide commission “to preach both on water and on the land, and in all the neighborhood, but principally in Esopus.” He was the first minister of what was then called Wiltwyck, Indian Village, or Esopus, now Kingston, New York. This settlement suffered much from the attacks of the Indians.† The other was Henricus Selyns, who settled at Breuckelen, then a village containing thirty-one families, and one hundred and thirty-four persons, and where he preached in a barn until a church edifice was completed. The people of Breuckelen not being able to give him an adequate support, Dominie Selyns was engaged by Governor Stuyvesant to preach in the afternoon at a chapel which he had built some distance out of town on his bouwerie, or farm. From this farm the Bowery received its name. Though this was quite far from the city, and there were woods and hills between, yet the people went out to attend evening service. There were also above forty negroes in the vicinity, who here received religious instruction. When Selyns settled at Breuckelen, Polhemus retired,* and confined his labors to Flatbush and Flatlands.*

About this time also, Bergen, in New Jersey, was

* Brodhead, p. 707.

† Doc. Hist., vol. iii., p. 581.

‡ Letter of Selyns. Doc. Hist., vol. iii., p. 72.

settled, and the ministers of New Amsterdam for many years went over occasionally to preach and to administer the sacraments. This was done on Mondays, for they could not be spared from their own church on Sundays. As late as 1751, this practice was continued, for in that year Dominie Gualterus Du Bois, while preparing for such a visit, was seized with a disease which in a few days terminated his life.*

In 1657 a church was organized at New Amstel, a colony founded by the city of Amsterdam, on the South, or Delaware River. Dominie Everardus Welius, "a young man of much esteem in life, in studies, in gifts, and in conversation," ministered to it until his death, which occurred in 1659.

In 1664, Samuel Megapolensis, son of Dominie Megapolensis, having studied at Utrecht and been ordained, came to New Amsterdam to take the place of Selyns, who now returned to Holland. He was also a doctor of medicine, a man of much learning and judgment. Such confidence was reposed in him that he was appointed one of the commissioners to treat with the British commander Nicolls about the surrender of the city. The capitulation took place on the 8th day of September, 1664. It was reluctantly made by Stuyvesant, who protested that he would "much rather be carried out dead," but he yielded to the importunity of the city authorities. Among the articles of capitulation was one guaranteeing to the Dutch liberty of conscience in divine worship and church discipline.†

Thus ended the Dutch rule in Manhattan. From

* Doc. Hist., iii., p. 324.

† Brodhead, p. 762.

the time of the establishment of the first trading station, it embraced fifty years. The church had been organized about thirty years. The Dutch retook New York in 1673, but in a very short time it was by treaty finally ceded to England. The city at the time of the surrender to Nicolls, contained about 1,500 inhabitants. In the entire province were five Reformed churches: New York, Albany, Flatbush and Flatlands, Esopus, Breuckelen. There were six ministers: the two Megapolenses, Drisius, Schaats, Polhemus, and Blom. They were men of thorough education, and, as far as we can learn, diligent in the ministry.

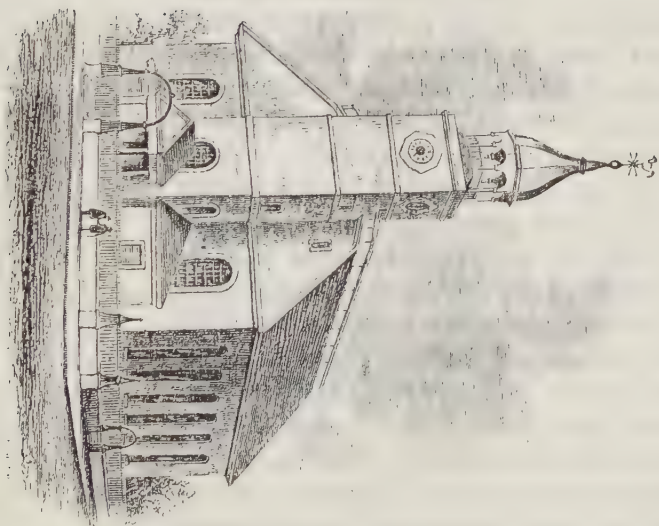
At this point terminates the first period of the history of the Reformed Dutch Church in North America. You behold how small that church was, even as a grain of mustard-seed, when Dutch rule and immigration ceased, and governmental patronage passed away forever.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE CESSATION OF THE DUTCH RULE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION, 1664—1792.

THE Reformed Dutch Church in this country is at the present day comparatively small. She numbers about three hundred and sixty-four congregations, and nearly as many ministers. Until very lately she was confined to parts of the States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Within a few years, however, churches have been established in some of the western States. The question sometimes is asked, how it happens, that this member of the Presbyterian family has been so far outstripped by her sister from Scotland, who came into this part of the country at a considerably later period.

Various reasons have been given for this. Some think that her name has been a great obstacle to her progress. Some reproach the past generations for slowness, and the lack of a liberal and progressive spirit. They can not see why the first church, that was planted in the metropolis of the New World, should not now cover the face of the land. At least, it is thought that she should ever have maintained her position as the leading church in the city of New York.



While we are not disposed to excuse any lack of missionary zeal or liberality, let us at the same time judge intelligently. Until the period of the Revolution, and for some time afterward, she labored, in common with other churches, under trials arising from the circumstances of the country, which was new, with resources undeveloped, and people struggling for a livelihood. She also encountered difficulties, that were peculiar, and mighty barriers to progress. We are not to wonder that she is at this day small, but rather, that she has an existence in the land.

In the preceding chapter we brought down the history to the year 1664, in which the city of New Amsterdam surrendered to the English. From that time until the year 1693 nothing very remarkable occurred. There were at the commencement of this period five congregations, and six ministers in the whole province. The infant church was now deprived of help and patronage from the civil power. The governor and authorities henceforth belonged to the Church of England, and, of course, gave to that church all their influence. Still the mass of the population was Dutch, as were the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants, and the Reformed Dutch Church continued for a long time to stand as the most prominent church in the province. A few new congregations were formed during this period along the Hudson, and in New Jersey, also one at Schenectady, and one on Staten Island.

The history of these times affords an illustration of our theory of the origin of Episcopacy in the primitive

Church. The theory is that, although according to Scripture and the apostolic model, all ministers are equal, yet that some, from their position as city pastors, early obtained influence over ministers and churches in the country, and in time claimed, and were allowed official superiority. The beginnings of such a process were here seen. The people of new settlements, or vacant congregations, were, as might be expected, accustomed to consult much with the city pastors, and in fact to allow them supervision over their affairs. In due time these pastors began to feel that it was their right to be thus consulted, and if ministers were invited to preach in vacant congregations without their consent, they were displeased.*

In the year 1693 an event occurred, that materially affected the condition and prospects of the Dutch Church, and that was the virtual establishment of Episcopacy by law, in a part of the province. This was done under the administration of Governor Fletcher. He was a very zealous Episcopalian, and procured the passage of an act, by which it was provided that in the city and county of New York, in the counties of Westchester, Queens, and Richmond, a certain number of vestry-men and church-wardens should be annually chosen by the people, and that by them ministers of the parishes should be elected. They were also authorized to levy a tax upon all the inhabitants for the support of these ministers. It is true that the act did not expressly require that the ministers must be Episcopalians, and a subsequent act ex-

* Christian's Magazine, vol. i., p. 370.

plained that Dissenters might be elected, but it was so managed that none but Episcopalians were chosen. Thus it happened that, until the Declaration of Independence, the people of all denominations in the portion of the colony referred to, were compelled to support the ministers of the Episcopal Church, in addition to their own. This caused much trouble in several congregations.*

The injustice of this was manifest. The Episcopalians were a small body composed principally of persons connected with the government, while the Dutch embraced the great mass of permanent settlers in the country. The testimony of Chief Justice Lewis Morris, given in a letter to the secretary of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," is valuable on this point, for he was an Episcopalian in authority.

He says, "The act to settle the church is very loosely worded, which, as things stood then, when it was made, could not be avoided, the Dissenters claiming the benefit of it as well as we, and the act without such wresting, will admit a construction in their favor as well as ours. They think it was intended for them, and that they only have a right to it. There is no comparison in our numbers, and they can, on the death of the incumbents, call persons of their own persuasion in every place but the city of New York, and if by force the salary is taken from them, and paid to the minister of the Church (i. e., Episcopal), it may be the means of subsisting these ministers, but they won't

* Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston, p. 96.

make many converts among a people who think themselves very much injured." He then intimates that it would have been better to pass no act; that the proper plan was to work with the youth, as the adult English population in the province was not very promising material. Our eastern neighbors will appreciate the compliment a high churchman pays their fathers when he says, "For as New England, excepting some families, was the scum of the old, so the greatest part of the English in this province was the scum of the new, who brought as many opinions, almost, as persons, but neither religion nor virtue, and have acquired a very little since."^{*}

Very vigorous measures were used for the spread and establishment of the Episcopal Church. The "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" sent over many missionaries, who laid the foundations of Episcopal Churches in the colony. Unpopular, as the act for settling the Church may have been, when its first workings were seen, yet we must remember that it continued in force more than eighty years; that the new generation had not the feeling against it, that the old had cherished; that all who looked for patronage or office from government, went into the Episcopal Church; that it attracted those who desired to move in court society; and that many also doubtless drew their strong reasons from their pockets, and concluded to worship in a Church which they were compelled to support, and to abandon the Church of their fathers. Is it matter of surprise that many of the

* Documentary History, vol. iii., p. 150.

Dutch families, especially in the city of New York, found their way into the Episcopal Church?

Closely connected with these was another cause, which not only produced much trouble, but was an effectual barrier to the progress of the Church. We refer to the use of the Dutch language in public worship. As long as this continued, the country at large was not open to the Church. She could not pass beyond the boundaries of the Dutch settlements. She could grow only by the natural increase of the Dutch population; for the immigration from Holland was arrested, and on strangers, even of Presbyterian and Calvinistic views, she could make no impression, because she spoke to them in an unknown tongue. The colony was English. It rapidly filled up with people from England. The language of the laws and courts was English. The schools soon became English. Intermarriages took place between the English and the Dutch, and the English language was used in all the adjacent colonies. Nothing, therefore, could be done in the way of spreading the Church, and there was danger of its losing ground within its original limits. The young people, especially in the city, were forgetting the language of their fathers. Many who could use the colloquial language in the family, could not understand the very different phraseology of public worship, for their school instruction and their reading were in English. There was also a growing predilection for the English language. It became fashionable, and many of the weaker ones were ashamed of being suspected of an ability even to understand their mother tongue.



The consequence of all this was a demand for preaching in English. The question of its introduction was seriously agitated, and the sagacious could not fail to see that the preservation of the Church depended on it. But the proposal met with strong opposition, especially from the aged members who were attached to their language, and really thought that if they should part with it, the essentials of the Church would be lost. In New York the controversy excited by this question was most violent and bitter. The Church there lost immensely by it. In the first place she lost those who desired the introduction of English preaching and were impatient of delay; in the second place she lost the lovers of peace, who were driven by the controversy into other communions; and, in the third place, as soon as English preaching was introduced, she lost those uncompromising opposers of it who were determined never to hear the English language in the Church of their fathers.

The consistory, after due consideration, resolved to call one minister to preach and catechize in English, while his colleagues should continue to officiate in Dutch. This was a moderate beginning. They also acted very carefully and judiciously in the matter. To prove that they were not, as was charged, secretly unfriendly to the Dutch, they resolved, if possible, to get an English preacher from Holland, and from the Classis of Amsterdam. They sent a blank call to the classis, which was filled by them with the name of Archibald Laidlie, a Scotchman, and minister of the English church in Flushing on the island of Zeeland.

He arrived in New York in the spring of 1764, and preached his first sermon on the 15th of April, after having announced his text in both English and Dutch from 2 Cor. v. 11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It was in the Middle Dutch Church, and a very numerous congregation was present, embracing the mayor and some of the aldermen of the city. But they were not yet prepared for the innovation of singing the praises of God in a language strange to their assemblies. The fore-singer, Jacobus Van Antwerp, after having read a chapter in English, started the familiar sonorous strains of the Dutch melody. It was a day of great rejoicing with many. "Ah! Dominie," said some pious praying people to him, at the close of a prayer-meeting; "we offered up many an earnest prayer in Dutch for your coming among us, and truly the Lord has heard us in English, and has sent you to us."

A better man than Mr. Laidlie, for the position at the time, could not have been selected. He was a man of learning, of eminent piety, excellent judgment, and peaceful disposition. He overcame the prejudices of many, who were won by the kind and affectionate deportment of "the English minister." He was a faithful preacher, warmly attached to the standards and usages of the Church, and his ministry was greatly blessed. During the Revolutionary war he retired to Redhook, New York, where he died in 1778.*

* The Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church contains a memoir of Dr. Laidlie, a portion of his first sermon in New York, and also an interesting account (vol. iii., p. 24) of the services connected with it.

The members of the Dutch party were most persevering in their opposition. They rejected the liberal offers of the consistory; they remonstrated; they put obstacles in the way of Mr. Laidlie, and they even went so far as to endeavor to change the old mode of electing members of the consistory.* The elders and deacons had always chosen their successors, and published their names on three successive Sabbaths for the approval of the congregation, but the Dutch party, supposing themselves in the majority, insisted that the members in full communion should vote at the next election. To test the question, one came to the election and offered his vote, which being rejected, a civil suit was brought which was decided in favor of the consistory. Meanwhile the congregation was canvassed, and it was clearly ascertained that a large majority of the members was in favor of the consistory. When the decision of the court was rendered, the most headstrong declared that, "if it must be English, it should be English," and went to the Episcopal church, where they never heard a syllable of the language for which they so earnestly contended. The rest continued quietly to attend the Dutch service in the old church in Garden street, until the congregation was broken up by time and death.*

Unquestionably these people were ardently attached to their Church, but they grievously mistook her true policy. They loved their own language, the language in which their fathers had worshiped, and

* See Remonstrance and Answer in Doc. Hist., vol. iii., p. 308.

† Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston, p. 99.

their mothers' earliest words of affection had been spoken. But the sacrifice of prejudice and feeling on their part was necessary. It should have been cheerfully made, or, at least, the measures of the consistory should have been quietly submitted to.

This was a great era in the Church, but we must not mistake its nature, by dating the abolition of the Dutch language in worship at this time. The beginning only was made of a very gradual introduction of the English tongue, by the calling of one English preacher to the city church. The Dutch remained in general use there and in the various churches in the country, many years afterward. In some, one sermon in Dutch and one in English were preached on the same day, with a short intermission, or on alternate Sabbaths. In some congregations this custom has ceased for not more than a quarter of a century. Until quite lately a few aged ministers have been in the habit of delivering one address at the communion table, and also of occasionally lecturing in private houses in Dutch, for the benefit of the few representatives left of the past generations. The last service in the Middle Dutch Church of New York was held August 11th, 1844, and the vast assembly, composed in a great measure of those who had there been baptized and made profession of their faith, was dismissed by Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt, with the apostolic benediction, in the venerable language in which the church had been dedicated, and its first pastors had ministered. It was appropriate that this tribute should be paid to the Dutch language in the same building within whose

walls the English had first been welcomed. Thus gradually has the mother language of the Church departed, lingering to the last in the affections of those who loved it for the sake of the fathers, and of the memories of their childhood, until it is no more known in her public services. The minutes of the General Synod began to be kept in English in the year 1794, so that it may be said then to have become the language of the church. It seems scarcely credible to us that it should have been introduced into public worship only ninety years ago, after the Dutch had had a century and a half of undisputed sway.*

Our account of the condition of the Church during this period, and of the obstacles to her progress, would be very incomplete without a notice of the manner in which her ministers were procured and settled, and of the great troubles that arose from it. There was no regular provision in this country for the education and ordination of ministers. At first when one was needed in any place, application was made to the Directors of the West India Company. These, for the most part, resided in Amsterdam. They consulted with the ministers of that city, and usually left it with them to procure a man suited to the field of labor and willing to enter it. Having found such a man, he was ordained and sent out by the Classis of Amsterdam. After the cessation of the Dutch rule, the churches corresponded directly with that body, and continued to receive their

* It is heard, again, in the churches of the Hollanders in the west. They, we rejoice to find, have adopted the enlightened policy of making the English language prevalent among them as soon as practicable.

ministers from it. Thus it happened, that for many years, all the ministers and churches of the denomination in America were in connection with the Classis of Amsterdam. Our chief source of information concerning the early history of the churches in this country, is found in the records and archives of that classis. A few years ago, the General Synod requested the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt to write a history of the Church (a work which we hope he will yet accomplish), and for that purpose procured the loan of the interesting and extensive correspondence between the classis and the churches in America. That classis has indeed always been noted for the interest it has taken in churches in the colonies east and west. It planted the German Reformed Church in this country, by sending out and supporting the first German ministers in the State of Pennsylvania.*

This dependence of the American churches on a classis in Holland, in time wrought evil. They should have wished and been allowed to take an independent stand as soon as they were capable of doing so. The Classis of Amsterdam should gladly have relieved herself of the care of churches so distant. But, on the contrary, she was tenacious of her authority, and a separate organization was here attained only after years of agitation and bitter strife.

The inconveniences of the situation of the churches will readily be seen, when it is remembered that there was no higher judicatory in the country than a consistory, and consequently there was no power of ordi-

* T. D. W. in *Christian Intelligencer*, September 23, 1852.

nation. Ministers could only be obtained from Holland, and candidates for the ministry here were obliged to go to the Fatherland to receive ordination. Thus much time was lost and expense incurred in the settlement of ministers. Congregations were often vacant for a long season. Discipline could not be promptly and thoroughly exercised, for a minister could be tried only by the classis, and no case of a private member could be finally settled here, for all the courts of appeal were on the other side of the water. This was the order of things, without the least attempt at change, or apparent thought of it, until the year 1737.

In that year a few ministers, keenly feeling these inconveniences, met together in the city of New York, and devised a plan for a sort of organization, for advice and fraternal conference.* They submitted it to the churches, by whom it was approved. It was then adopted by a convention of ministers and elders, and sent to the Classis of Amsterdam for its approbation.† That body held the subject under consideration for nine years, perhaps from a sagacious fear that the pro-

* The members of this convention, were—Rev. G. Dubois, Rev. B. Freeman, Rev. C. Van Santvoort, Rev. G. Haeghoort, Rev. A. Curtenius, Rev. T. I. Frelinghuysen, of Raritan; Rev. R. Erickson, of Nauwesink; Rev. J. Bohm, of Philadelphia; Rev. Mr. Schuyler, of Schoharie. Elders—Anthony Rutgers, Abraham Lederts, Peter Nevius, Dirk Brinkerhoef, Goosen Adriaance, F. Van Dyck. — Zabriskie, H. Fisher, J. Zutveen, — Snyder, — Spies.—*Christian's Magazine*, vol. ii, p. 4.

† Their names were G. Dubois, of New York; G. Haeghoort, of Second River; B. Freeman, of Long Island; C. Van Santvoort, of Staten Island; A. Curtenius, of Hackensack.—*Christian's Magazine*, vol. ii, p. 4.

posed action would, in the end, effect a separation between themselves and their distant charge. At the end of that time, however, they approved the plan, and in 1747 the proposed body was constituted under the name of the Coetus.

It will be distinctly noted that this body had no ecclesiastical powers. It was merely advisory, and consequently all the evils we have referred to continued to exist; and, indeed, were felt more keenly than ever. In a few special cases the Coetus was allowed by the classis to ordain ministers. This only tended to open the eyes of the ministers and people. They saw that the Church in this country was competent to do her own work, and that she must have higher judicatories of her own. They saw, also, that the ministers who were taught and ordained here, were no less able and useful than many who had come from Holland.

The demand for the formation of a classis was now openly made, and in 1754 it was proposed in the Coetus that that body should be changed into a regular classis; and it was resolved that the opinions of the churches upon it should be obtained. This action was the signal for a bitter war of parties, that was carried on for fifteen years.

The ministers who had been ordained in this country felt no particular attachment to the Classis of Amsterdam, and they and their churches generally favored the proposition. Vacant churches, who did not like the trouble, delay, and expense of sending to Holland for ministers, also favored it. The minds of many were influenced by seeing that some ministers who had

been sent over, did not suit their fields of labor, that some did not harmonize with the people, and that the characters of some were decidedly bad. It seemed also to be a humiliating thing to be ever dependent on a foreign Church, when there was no good reason for it. Some of the Holland ministers also felt the force of these considerations, and thus was formed what was called the Coetus party, which took a bold stand for separation from the Classis of Amsterdam.

On the other hand, the older ministers, who had been born and educated in Holland, and still regarded it as their home, were bitterly opposed to the measure. They seemed to think that an ordination could scarcely be valid, unless it came from the Classis of Amsterdam. They especially feared that the Church in America, having no academical and theological institution, would lose her learned and respected ministry. They organized the party called the Conferentie, in 1755, and opened a correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam, in which they complained bitterly of the efforts made by the American churches to cast off the authority of their mother.*

These parties were nearly equal in numbers, but most of the learning was with the Conferentie, while practical piety, zeal, and a progressive spirit were mostly found among the members of the Coetus. The differences between the parties were not debated with mod-

* The names of the ministers in this party, were—Haeghoort, Curtinius, Ritzema, De Ronde, Vander Leinde, Schuyler, Van Sinderin, Rubel, Freyemoet, Kock, Kern, Rysdyck.—Christian's Magazine, vol. ii., p. 9.

eration, but with vehemence, and which, in some cases among the people, broke into open violence. "The peace of the churches was destroyed. Not only neighboring ministers and congregations were at variance, but in many places the same congregation was divided, and in those instances in which the numbers, or the influential characters on different sides were nearly equal, the consequences became very deplorable. Houses of worship were locked by one part of the congregation against the other. Tumults on the Lord's day at the doors of the churches were frequent. Quarrels respecting the services and the contending claims of different ministers and people often took place. Preachers were sometimes assaulted in the pulpits, and public worship either disturbed or terminated by violence. In these attacks the Conferentie party were considered as the most vehement and outrageous. But on both sides a furious and intemperate zeal prompted many to excesses, which were a disgrace to the Christian name, and threatened to bring into contempt that cause which both professed to be desirous of supporting."*

The Coetus party determined to secure independence; and to be ready for it, procured a charter for Queen's now Rutgers College, in 1770. The object for which the charter was granted, was declared in the document to be the training of a ministry for the Dutch churches in America. This was far from helping to a reconciliation of the parties.†

In some of the churches, also, troubles arose from

* Christian's Magazine, vol. ii., p. 10.

† Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston.—Christian's Magazine, vol. ii.

the aversion of many to close and faithful preaching. Some of the old ministers valued orthodoxy more than experimental religion, and admitted members to the communion without a careful examination of their evidences of piety. This was contrary to the practice so clearly enjoined by the Synod of Dort. The consequence was, that there were then as now, many church members, who knew nothing of the life of God in the soul, and when a different ministry came, they could not endure it. Thus Dr. Harmanus Meier, a very faithful experimental preacher, had no sooner commenced his ministry at Kingston, than he met with persecution, which did not cease until, by the help of an irregular conclave of neighboring ministers, he was ejected from his church.* Dominie Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen met with the same difficulty in New Jersey. He settled on the Raritan, in 1720, and labored through the whole region, now covered by the churches of Somerset county. He there, amid severe persecutions, accomplished an excellent work. Religion was greatly revived in that region, before the arrival of Whitfield and the Tennents, with whom he was afterward associated.†

* Christian's Magazine, vol. ii., p. 10. The Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, contains several articles on the history of Dr. Meier, and of his difficulties at Kingston. After his removal to Pompton, N. J., he was appointed by the General Synod, Professor of Oriental languages, and Lector or Assistant Professor of Theology.

† "He was a great blessing to the Dutch Church in America. He came over from Holland, in the year 1720, and settled on the Raritan. He left five sons, all ministers, and two daughters, married to ministers." —Christian's Magazine, vol. ii., p. 4.

To moderate and reflecting men, the Church seemed to be on the very brink of ruin, and they saw no earthly help. There was no impartial authority to appeal to. Many fled from their ecclesiastical home to find that peace among strangers, which was denied them by their kindred.

God's eye, however, was upon the Church, and He wrought for her a wonderful deliverance. His chosen instrument was John H. Livingston. He was a descendant of the eminent John Livingston of Ancram, in Scotland, under one sermon of whom, at the kirk of Shotts, five hundred souls were converted, and who afterward found an asylum from persecution at Rotterdam, in Holland, where he preached and died. Robert Livingston, to whom the patent for the manor of Livingston was granted in 1684, was a son of this eminent man of God. John H., the great-grandson of Robert, was born near Poughkeepsie, in 1746. He graduated at Yale College, and entered upon the study of the law, but after his conversion, he devoted himself to the ministry. Having duly weighed the claims of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Reformed Dutch Churches, he determined to enter the last, of which his parents were members. This was at the most gloomy period of her history.

He went to Holland, studied at the University of Utrecht, and returned in 1771 as an ordained minister, and Doctor of Divinity, and was called to be one of the collegiate pastors in New York, to officiate in the English language.

Before his departure to Holland, he was deeply af-

fectured by the situation of the Church. An ardent desire to become an instrument for healing the existing painful breach, was excited in him. He seemed also to be impressed with the idea that God would make him such an instrument, and he at once devoted himself to the work. Soon after his arrival in Holland, he began his operations in a most careful and judicious manner, by talking privately with the ministers there, informing them of the progress of society in America, and of the wants of the Church. He then gradually unfolded his views, showing that something must be done to secure the training and ordination of ministers here, and that without a more efficient organization, the American churches must perish. He found them, for the most part, well disposed, and ready to enter into his plans.

The next step was to get the consent of the Synod of North Holland, that the Classis of Amsterdam should be a permanent committee, with full powers to act in reference to the affairs of the American churches. For that purpose Mr. Livingston attended the meetings of the Synod, and conversed with its members, and his object was attained without difficulty. This was all that could be done in Holland at that time. It remained now to obtain the consent of the Conferentie party to a more effective organization of the Church. To accomplish this, he and also the ministers of the Classis of Amsterdam, labored by correspondence with members of that party, and with much success, for they were disposed to listen to any thing that came from Holland. The bitter spirit that had prevailed,

wore away, and many, tired of strife, were ready for conditions of peace.

Shortly after his settlement in New York, Dr. Livingston induced the consistory of the Church there to invite a convention, to devise measures of peace. This was to consist of all the ministers, with one elder from each church.* The invitation came from the best source possible, for the church of New York was not only a city church, the oldest, largest, and most influential in the country, but it, as well as the church in Albany, had

* The Convention was composed of the following members:

	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Poughkeepsie and Fishkill,	Isaac Rysdyck,	Richard Snedecker.
English Neighborhood,	Gerrit Leydecker,	Michael Moor.
King's Co., Long Island,	{Johannes Caspar Rubbel, Ulpianus Van Sinderin,	Englebert Lott. J. Rappalje.
New Brunswick,	Johaunes Leydt,	Hendrick Fischer.
Hackensack,	Warmaldus Ruypers,	Garret De Marest.
Kaats'kill and Cossackie,	Johannes Schunema,	
Bergen and Staten Island,	William Jackson,	Abraham Sikkels.
Pompton,	Harmanus Meier,	
Marbletown & Mombachus,	Derick Romeyn,	L. Pawling.
Millstone and Neshannic,	Johannes M. Van Harlingen,	Jacobus Van Arsdalen.
Gravesend and Harlem,	Martinus Schoonmaker,	Johannes Sikkels.
Hackensack and Schraalenberg,	{Johannes Henry Goetschius, Benjamin Vanderlinde,	{Peter Zabriskie, and D. Herring.
Paramus,	Jacobus R. Hardenbergh,	Stephen Zabriskie.
Raritan,	Samuel Ver Breyck,	Cornelius Vander Meulen.
Tappan,	Eilardus Westerlo,	Rulof Van Houten.
Albany,	{Lambertus De Ronde, Archibald Laidlie,	H. Gansevoort.
New York,	{John H. Livingston, David Marinus,	Jacobus Van Santen.
Achquackkenong,	Benjamin Du Bois,	Isaac Roosevelt.
Freehold and Middletown,		Cornelius Sebring.
Kingston,		Evert Byvanck.
Haerlem,		G. Tingena.
		A. Zipkens.
		{Jacobus Eltinge.
		{Adrian Wynkoop.
		Adolph Meyer.

remained neutral in the controversy. In October 1771, this invitation was responded to by a very full convention of ministers and elders, held in the city of New York. There were present twenty-two ministers and twenty-four elders. Dr. Livingston being at that time president of the consistory of the church of New York, was chosen president of the Convention. It was evident at the opening of the sessions, that the members had come together in a proper spirit, and were prepared for Christian union.

A committee of twelve, composed of two ministers and two elders from each party, and the same number of neutrals, was appointed to prepare a plan of union. Dr. Livingston being on the committee, now for the first time produced the plan which he had drawn up in Holland, and which had there been informally approved. It had three objects in view: 1st. The internal arrangement and government of the churches. It provided for the organization of superior church judicatories, for the establishment of a professorship for the education of ministers, and for the founding of schools. 2d. The healing of dissensions in the various churches. 3d. Correspondence with the Church in Holland. It was provided that the minutes of the ecclesiastical courts should always be sent to the Classis of Amsterdam, and that the Classis, or if need be, the Synod of North Holland, might be appealed to in cases of difficulty.

In October, 1772, the Convention again assembled, and a letter* from the Classis of Amsterdam, fragrant

* A translation of this letter was published in the Christian Intelligencer of August 19, 1852.

with the spirit of Christian charity, was read, in which they declared their full approbation of the plan, and expressed their earnest wishes and prayers for the prosperity of the American churches. Thus were the wounds of the bleeding Church healed, and harmony was restored among her ministers and members.*

Let any one, who is disposed to wonder that the first Church that was planted in New Amsterdam does not now cover the land, review the ground over which we have passed. Let him bear in mind that the Dutch rule lasted only thirty years after the introduction of the Church; that it departed when New Amsterdam had a little more than a thousand inhabitants; that for most of the time until the establishment of national independence, the chief portions of the Church struggled for life under the shadow of an Episcopal establishment. Let him remember, that her doors were closed to Calvinistic Presbyterians coming from Scotland and Ireland, for a century and a quarter, by the unknown tongue in which she spoke; and that these established churches of their own forty-five years before an English word was heard in a Dutch church, and thus the opportunity for gaining by accessions from them was never enjoyed; and that at the same time immigration from the Fatherland ceased. Moreover, let him remember that for a century and a half she had no organized existence here, no court higher than a consistory, no power of ordination; that she was simply an unorganized dependent on a foreign Church, and at the same time torn by internal dissen-

* Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston.—Christian's Magazine.

sions. How could she make progress? Was she not as a bush burning, but not consumed?

The Church seemed now to have arrived at a favorable position. Now she had facilities to spread and tell on the surrounding population. One thing, however, was lacking, provision for the education of her ministry. She, of all Churches in the land, was least able to succeed without an educated ministry, for she had been always taught to consider this as essential. It was required by the Articles of Union, that provision should be made for it. Moreover, the Church in Holland would not consent to the independence of the American Churches, until this had been guaranteed. In the Fatherland great importance was attached to learning in the ministry, and no country has produced a greater proportion of eminent theologians than Holland. The ministry of the Dutch Church in this country was standing in the front rank. The fear that a highly educated ministry would be lost to her, powerfully urged the Conferentie to take the stand they did. At once, therefore, the subject of a professorship of theology was agitated, and measures were taken for its establishment. "The Reformed Dutch Church is thus entitled to the credit of having first contemplated and adopted a system of theological education in this country, which has received the approbation and been followed by the practice of almost all her sister Churches."*

In 1773, it was resolved in Convention at Kingston, to ask the Classis of Amsterdam to send a professor of

* Rev. Dr. De Witt's sermon on the death of Livingston.

theology from Holland. The classis consulted with the theological faculty of Utrecht, and they agreed, not to send a man, but to recommend Dr. Livingston for the office. In 1775, the Assembly met again; he would then have been appointed, but the Revolution had just broken out, and the Assembly adjourned after having appointed a day for fasting and prayer.

The Church now had her share of trial in the troublous times that followed. Congregations were scattered. Only a small remnant of the church of New York continued in the city. The four pastors retired into the country, Deronde to Scaghticoke, Ritzema to Kinderhook, Laidlie to Redhook, and Livingston went to Kingston, N. Y., with the family of his father-in-law, Philip Livingston, who was a member of Congress, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. He afterward went to Albany, where he preached for some time, then to Livingston's Manor, where he remained eighteen months, preaching every Sabbath in Dutch and English, and finally to his father's residence at Poughkeepsie where he remained until the close of the war.

After the city had been evacuated by the British, he returned and resumed his labors with mingled emotions of joy and sadness. Of the four pastors, who were there at the commencement of the war, he now stood alone. The excellent Laidlie had died, and Deronde and Ritzema were too infirm to return. Two of the churches had been desecrated. The Middle church had been used both for a prison and a riding-school, the North for a prison. The South church in Garden

street had not been abused, and there the scattered members of the congregation were re-collected, and there they worshiped until the other edifices had been repaired. The subject of the professorship was now again agitated, and Dr. Livingston was promptly and unanimously elected Professor of Theology, in 1784.* In the following year articles of correspondence were agreed upon between the Presbyterian, Associate Reformed, and Dutch Churches.

Another subject also occupied the minds of the ministers and members of the Church. They felt that a more thorough organization was necessary. The Articles of union had answered an excellent purpose, but something more was demanded. Hence the Particular and General Assemblies, provided for by the articles, became Classes and Particular Synods; and a third body was now constituted, viz., the General Synod, which was to meet once in three years.†

It was also deemed important that a manual should be published in the English language, containing the acts of the Synod of Dort. The preparation of this manual was intrusted to Drs. Livingston and T. Romeyn. They found much that was appropriate only to the Church in the Netherlands. They, therefore, reported only what was suitable to the Church in America, and

* Some had thought of securing the education of students of theology under the auspices of Dr. Witherspoon, in Princeton College, others contemplated the establishment of a divinity professorship in King's, now Columbia College. It was finally agreed to remain independent of those institutions.—Gunn's *Memoirs of Livingston*, p. 184.

† Digest of the printed minutes of the General Synod, chap. iii., *Explanatory Articles*.

added a number of explanatory articles. Their report was adopted in 1792, and published in a volume, with the confession, catechism and liturgy, and entitled the "Constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America."

"The adoption of this Constitution," says Dr. Gunn, "is a most memorable event, as it established that consolidation of the union, without which, it was much to be feared, the union would be but of temporary duration, and placed the Church in a position to maintain her character, to make herself known and respected among other denominations, and to prosecute with life and energy any enterprise, the successful accomplishment of which might be deemed essential to her future prosperity; and of the Constitution, it may be averred that it has proved the palladium (if the term be allowable) of the Church, or rather the great safeguard, next to the Bible, under the Divine blessing, of her government, peace and purity. It is a good caution, Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set."*

Thus was the Church brought through most trying times by her Divine head. The chief instrument that he used deserves all of the place we have given him in the narrative. He was a burning and shining light, and many rejoiced in his light. We shall have occasion again to speak of him, for God long continued him as a counsellor to the Church and teacher of her teachers. Nor should the names of his friends and co-workers, Laidlie, Westerlo, Romeyn, Hardenbergh,

* Gunn's Memoirs of Livingston.

Leydt, Verbryck, Jackson, and Rysdyck be forgotten. They were men valiant for the truth not only, but peace-makers. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION TO THE
PRESENT TIME—1792-1855.

THE history of the Church from the adoption of the Constitution until the present time is the history of gradual and quiet progress. It is marked by the establishment and increasing efficiency of her educational institutions, missionary boards, and other agencies for carrying on her work.

We have already adverted to the importance attached in Holland to a learned ministry; we have seen how well the American Church was provided for in this respect; how the fear that this blessing might be lost, caused the Conferentie to cling tenaciously to the Classis of Amsterdam, and how it was made an indispensable condition to the independence of the Church here, that she should provide for the education of her ministers. For the attainment of this end, she has persevered through many difficulties, and succeeded at last in making what, considering her extent and strength, is a munificent provision for the purpose. We introduce the reader to

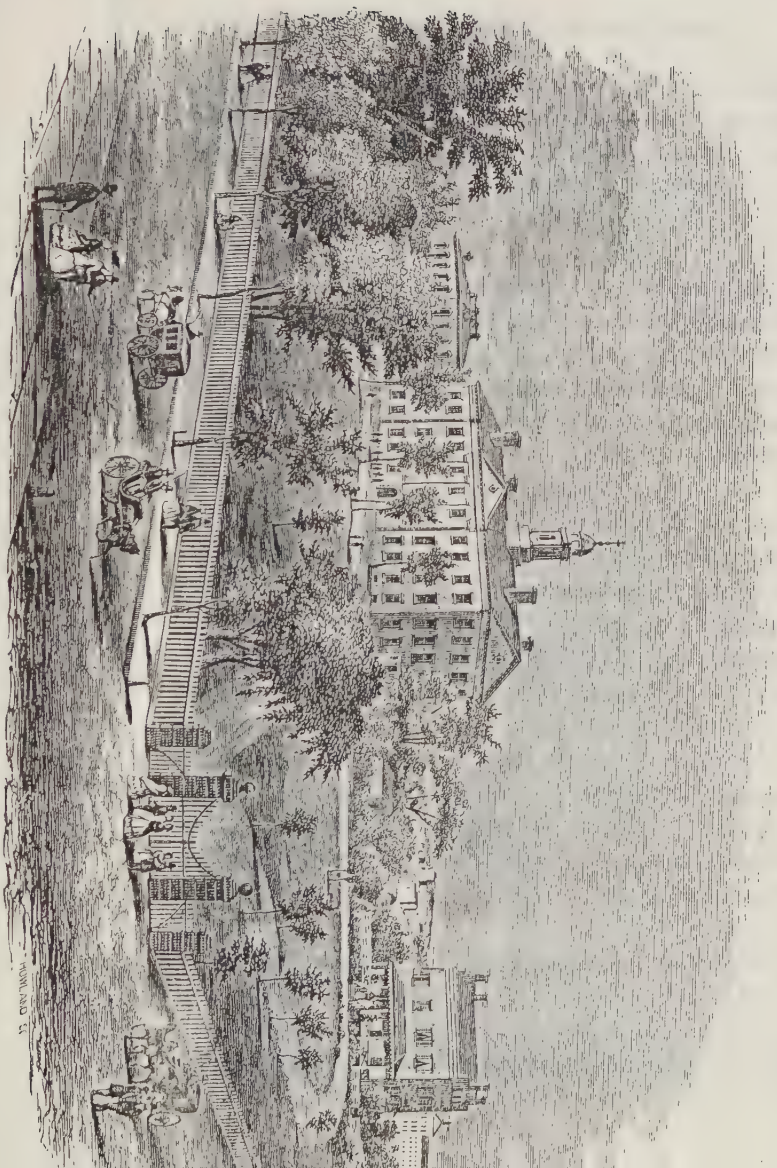
I. RUTGERS COLLEGE AND THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

These institutions are entirely distinct from each other in their organization, but their relations have been and are so intimate, that it is expedient to carry on their histories together. The college was the first-born of the sisters. A charter was obtained in 1770 from George III., through Governor Franklin of New Jersey, for the establishment of a college, under the name of Queen's,* for preparing young men for the ministry in the Reformed Dutch Church.† It was procured chiefly by the exertions of members of the Coetus party. Its trustees held their first meeting at Hackensack, N. J., and a question arose whether the college should be located there or at New Brunswick. The latter place was agreed upon. Rev. Dr. Jacobus R. Hardenbergh, of Rosendale, was elected President, and also chosen pastor of the Reformed Dutch church at New Brunswick. He was one of those who had been ordained by the Coetus, a man of strong native powers, and who by industry had so overcome early disadvantages that he earned the reputation of a distinguished divine. He continued in the presidency until his death in 1790. John Taylor was appointed Professor of Languages. He took an active part in the Revolutionary War, drilled the students as a military company, and was made Colonel of the New Jersey State Regiment.

* This name was given in honor of the Queen of George III.—
Rupp's History of Religious Denominations.

† See Charter.

Van Nest Hall, Rutgers College, President's House, Hertzog Hall.



Rev. Dr. Livingston was elected to succeed Dr. Hardenbergh in the presidency, but he declined the office. Rev. Dr. Theodorick Romeyn was then elected, but he also declined. Under the temporary presidencies of Rev. Dr. William Linn, and Rev. Dr. Ira Condict, degrees were conferred until the year 1795. From that time until 1807, the exercises in the college were suspended. A union with Princeton was contemplated by some, but the idea was abandoned, "for it was felt that the union would be nothing less than a merging of Queen's into Nassau Hall. The Trustees preferred to hold their charter, and wait patiently for a favorable time to revive the institution."^{*}

Rev. Dr. Livingston was appointed Professor of Theology in 1784. The trustees of the college would gladly have had the professorate united with their institution. But as the college owed its existence to one of the parties, whose dissensions had only just been healed, it was thought more prudent to let the theological professorship stand independently of the literary institution, at least for the present. Plans for the support of the professor were considered, but little could at that time be effected, on account of the pressing wants of the churches. Dr. Livingston, therefore, held his pastoral charge in New York, and labored as professor at the same time. A number of young men were thus prepared for the ministry. To accommodate such students as were not able to bear the expense of living in the city, the synod appointed two ministers, Rev. Dr. Theodorick Romeyn, of Schenec-

* General Catalogue of Rutgers' College, 1855.

tady, of the northern, and Rev. Dr. Solomon Froeligh, of Hackensack and Schraalenbergh, of the southern part of the Church, with whom they were allowed to read theology, on condition of finishing their studies with Dr. Livingston, or, at least, of submitting to an examination by him.

To obviate some of the difficulties under which the professorate was laboring, the consistory of the Church in New York agreed with the synod that Dr. Livingston should henceforth render them half his usual service, relinquish half his salary, and open a divinity-school at Bedford, L. I., a short distance from Brooklyn. He began there, with a flattering number of students, in 1796. But the very next year, the synod, utterly discouraged by the difficulty of raising funds, resolved that it was inexpedient for the present to attempt to raise them, and they appointed Drs. Romeyn and Froeligh additional Professors of Theology. The consequence of this unceremonious desertion of the Divinity school, was the return of Dr. Livingston to New York, and the resumption of his ministerial labors.

Finding that this plan did not work well, the synod, in 1804, came back to the original idea of one permanent endowed professorship. Dr. Livingston was chosen to it, to reside for the present in New York; and resolutions to attempt to raise the necessary funds were adopted. Thus the way was prepared for Dr. Livingston's separation from his pastoral charge.

In 1807, the Trustees of Queen's College, desirous of reviving the institution, proposed to the synod a

union of the college and theological professorate. They engaged to make the college subservient to the great end for which its charter had been obtained, "the promotion of a faithful and able ministry in the Dutch Church." It was agreed that funds should be raised by the trustees for the support of the synod's professor, and who was also to be chosen Professor of Theology and President in the college.

In the same year the first Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary was appointed, to "assist the professor in arranging the course of instruction, and to attend to the examination of students in theology, previous to their examination for licensure."*

The result of these arrangements between the synod and trustees, was the removal, in the year 1810, of Dr. Livingston, at the age of sixty-four, to New Brunswick, where he continued as Professor of Theology and President of the college until his death, in 1825. The Seminary opened with five students, Thomas De Witt, John S. Mabon, Robert Bronk, Peter S. Wynkoop, and a Mr. Barclay. Dr. Livingston devoted his strength to his professorship, while Rev. Dr. Condict, and after him, Rev. Dr. Schureman, pastors of the Dutch church at New Brunswick, acted as Vice Presidents of the college.

The efforts to increase the professoral fund, made by the trustees among the Dutch churches, met with gradual success. For a long time, however, it was inadequate, and the deficiency was partially supplied by subscriptions and collections in the churches. The

* Minutes of General Synod.

college also languished for want of funds, and suffered from the lack of a suitable building.

In 1809, the foundation was laid of the present college edifice, containing a chapel, library, philosophical and recitation-rooms, laboratory, and two dwellings for professors. In 1816, the exercises in the college were suspended, and its doors were closed until 1825.

To return to the seminary. Dr. Livingston was the sole professor until 1817, aided by teachers in Hebrew, first, Rev. Dr. Bassett, and then, Rev. Jeremiah Romeyn, and Rev. John M. Van Harlingen.

In 1815, the synod, feeling that an additional professorship was necessary, appointed Rev. John Schureman, a man of excellent promise, Professor of Pastoral Theology, and Ecclesiastical History. The churches of Albany and New Brunswick, made very liberal contributions to his salary, and vigorous efforts were made to meet the deficiency by annual collections from the other churches. In two years and a half the Church was called to mourn over his removal by death.

Rev. Thomas De Witt having declined to fill the vacancy, Rev. John S. Mabon, and Rev. James S. Cannon were temporarily engaged to give instruction in these branches of theological study.

In 1819, Rev. John Ludlow was appointed Professor of Biblical Literature, and Ecclesiastical History, and continued in this office until 1823, when he removed to the North Dutch Church, in the city of Albany, and his place was filled by the Rev. John De Witt.

The Church was now tried by the departure of her venerated Livingston, after having served her for fifty-

five years in the ministry, and forty-one in the professorship. On the day before his death, while lecturing to the students, on the subject of Divine Providence, he alluded to the Saviour's dying exclamation, "It is finished," and added, "His work was done, and then His Father took Him home, and just so, He will do with me; when my work is done, my Father will take me home."* In usual health, he retired to rest. In the morning, his little grandson called him, but there was no answer. The spirit had departed. The body was lying on the bed in an easy posture, indicating that the separation had taken place without a struggle. It is well known that he had always been troubled, not with the fear of death, but of the pains of dying, and it was his constant prayer, that he might never experience them.

Dr. Livingston, it will readily be seen, was an extraordinary man, a man of learning, wisdom, and piety, raised up and qualified to meet the wants of the times. His foibles and infirmities only serve to place the sterling elements of his character in stronger light. His students, at this day, love to bring up pleasant reminiscences of their intercourse with him. His personal appearance was most commanding, his manners those of a perfect gentleman of the old school; he was at home in the theological room, and in the pulpit he spoke with uncommon power.†

His successor was Rev. Dr. Philip Milledoler, who

* "The School of the Prophets," a sermon by Rev. B. C. Taylor, D. D.

† Memoirs of Livingston.

was elected in 1825, and remained in office until his resignation in 1841. He was a man, not only of theological attainments, but of extraordinary pulpit talents, fervent piety, and noted above all things for his power in prayer.

In 1825, the Rev. Dr. Selah S. Woodhull was appointed Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government. In the same year he was removed by death, and in 1826, Rev. Dr. James S. Cannon was elected in his stead.

Thus was the seminary visited with stroke upon stroke, and yet it was not enough, for in 1831, professor John De Witt, a man of eminent gifts and culture, was cut down in the midst of his days, and height of his usefulness.

Rev. Dr. Alexander McClelland was chosen professor in his place in 1832, and continued until his resignation in 1851.

The venerable, learned, and beloved Cannon went to his rest in 1852. Side by side in the cemetery of the first Dutch church at New Brunswick lie the bodies of these honored teachers of our ministry, Livingston, Schureman, Woodhull, De Witt, and Cannon. "The memory of the just is blessed."

The following professors are now in service in the institution:

Rev. Samuel A. Van Vranken, D.D., Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology.

Rev. William H. Campbell, D.D., Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature, and Exegetical Theology.

Rev. John Ludlow, D.D., Professor of Pastoral Theology, and Ecclesiastical History and Government.

In the year 1825, the college was revived, and received the name of Rutgers, in honor of Colonel Henry Rutgers of New York. At that time the consistory of the Collegiate Church of New York, on application of the Board of Trustees of the college, agreed to support a third theological professor for three years, provided that the funds for the endowment of the new professorship should be raised within the bounds of the Particular Synod of Albany. The agents of the Synod were successful in obtaining the requisite subscriptions, and in September, 1825, a plan for the revival of the college was adopted by the General Synod. This was the basis of a covenant, then entered into, between the Trustees and the Synod. By this covenant, the Synod engaged that the theological professors should do service in the college, and that the college should have the use of the building, which had become by purchase the property of the Synod. It was engaged by the Trustees to appoint a Professor of Languages, and also of Mathematics, and to elect one of the theological professors as president. Under this covenant, somewhat modified, the institution continues to the present day.*

After the resignation of President Milledoler, the presidency was separated from the theological professorship, and the Hon. A. Bruyn Hasbrouck, LL.D., was chosen president in 1840. He resigned in 1850,

* See Covenant in the Digest of Minutes of Synod.

and Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, LL.D., was appointed to fill the vacancy.

The present faculty is composed of:

Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, LL.D., President and Professor of International and Constitutional Law, Moral Philosophy, and Rhetoric.

Theodore Strong, LL.D., Professor of Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy.

Rev. Samuel A. Van Vranken, D.D., Professor of the Evidences of Christianity and Logic.

Rev. William H. Campbell, D.D., Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature, and Belles Lettres.

Rev. John Ludlow, D.D., Professor of Mental Philosophy.

George H. Cooke, M.D., Professor of Chemistry, and Natural Sciences.

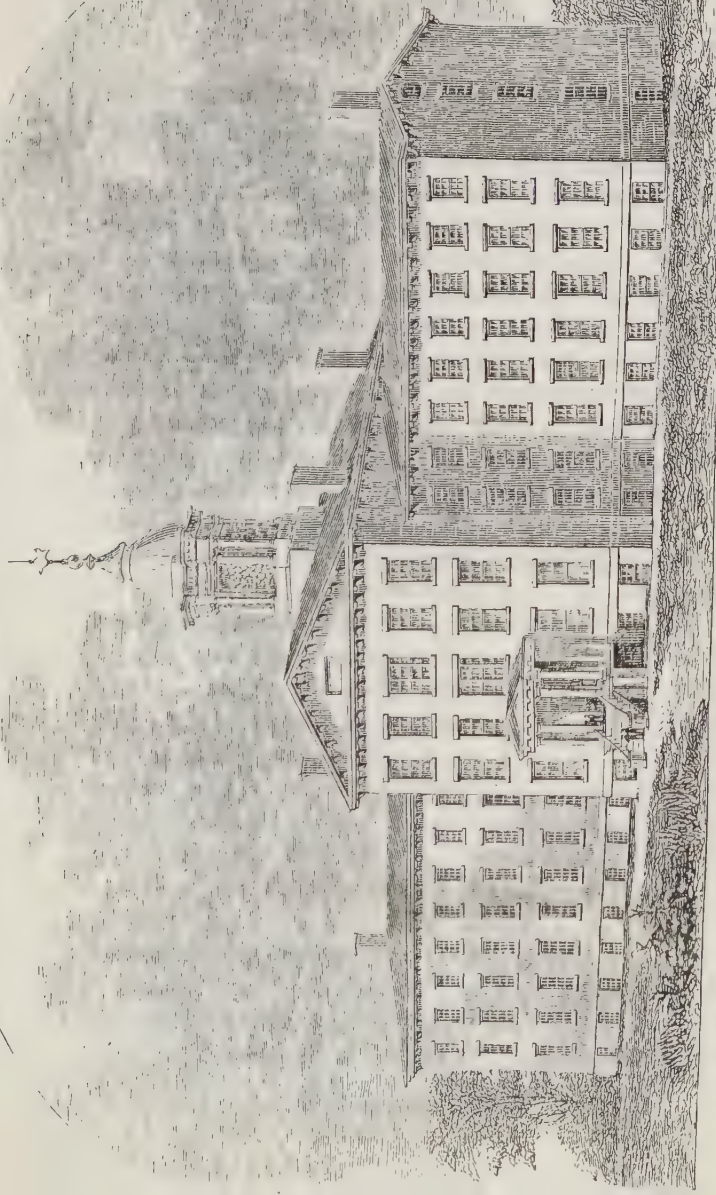
Rev. John Proudfit, D.D., Professor of the Greek Language and Literature.

Rev. C. R. V. Romondt, A.M., Professor of Modern Languages and Literature.

William Irvin, A.M., Professor of the Latin Language and Literature.

There is also a preparatory Grammar School connected with the college, of which Rev. William I. Thompson, A.M., is Rector.

If it be asked, what has been accomplished by these institutions, we answer, that in the seminary, from the year 1812, three hundred and twenty-three young men have been prepared for the ministry, embracing many of our most able and successful men. In the college,



Peter Hertzog Theological Hall, New-Brunswick, N. J.
Erected 1886.

six hundred and fifty-two have received a liberal education.

Both these institutions stand as noble monuments to the liberality and perseverance of our fathers, in securing for their Church an educated ministry. They were both established with the same end in view. Through discouragements and interruptions, the trustees continued to hold their charter, and to hope for better days. The churches, when very few and weak, struggled for the endowment of one theological professorship, contributing at the same time, annually, for the support of the professor. It was felt at last that vigorous efforts must be made to have more professorships, and to endow them fully. These efforts were made, and crowned with speedy and complete success, for all parts of the Church came up to the work with commendable unanimity and liberality.

And now the foundation has been laid, and while we are writing, the walls are rising of the "Peter Herzog Theological Hall," for the accommodation of the Seminary, and to be a home for students preparing for the ministry. The Church is enabled to make this important addition to her facilities for educating young men for the ministry, by means of the munificent donation of \$30,000 from Mrs. Anna Herzog, of Philadelphia. Long may she live to witness blessed influences flowing from her benefaction.*

Funds have also been raised by the trustees to a considerable amount, for the endowment of the professorships in the college, and they are now making vigor-

* See Appendix, p. 212.

ous efforts to increase their means, chiefly by the establishment of scholarships.

Before this, a number of scholarships had been established by liberal members of the Church, and considerable provision had been made for the support of indigent young men while preparing for the ministry. Rev. Elias Van Benschoten, devised funds for this object, amounting now to about \$20,000; Miss Rebecca Knox, \$2,000. There is also a Board of Education that receives and applies donations from the churches and from individuals to this object. Many of our most eminent ministers have reaped the benefit of these wise and beneficent provisions.*

II. MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

In regard to missions, we have been charged with being particularly slow and very far behind other denominations. But if we call to mind the difficulties under which the Church labored until the beginning of the present century, we will not be unreasonable in our expectations. The subject early received attention, though for a long time not much was accomplished.

In the year 1793 the New York Missionary Society was formed, composed of members of the Presbyterian, Associate Reformed, and Reformed Dutch Churches. Its efforts were chiefly directed to the conversion of the Indians in the State of New York. Rev. Dr. Livingston preached two sermons before it, which had great effect in kindling a missionary spirit through the

* Minutes of Synod; Catalogues of Rutgers' College and Theological Seminary; Catalogue of the Alumni of Rutgers' College, 1855.

country. Indeed, it is said that by these sermons, Mills and his companions at Andover, were first impressed with a sense of their duty to go to the heathen.

We find, also, that as early as 1797, pastors were sent out by the Synod on missionary tours through destitute parts of the country, while their pulpits were supplied by the Synod. Some visited Canada and also Kentucky, where were Dutch settlements. The Northwestern Missions were under the direction of the Classis of Albany. In 1806 a Standing Committee on Missions was appointed by the Synod, and the Rev. Messrs. Henry Ostrander and Jacob Sickles spent three months in Upper Canada surveying the ground. Rev. Messrs. Alexander Gunn and John Beattie were, in 1810, appointed to a similar work. The Synod then used the following language: "Every body of Christians enjoying the means of grace, are not only bound to improve them for the glory of God and their own advancement in the Divine life, but also as their circumstances will admit, to assist in sending the Gospel to those who are destitute."*

In the year 1817, Rev. Messrs. John F. Schermerhorn and Jacob Van Vechten spent three months in missionary labor in Upper Canada. They reported that at that time there were eleven Reformed Dutch Churches in the province, and two ministers were laboring among them. Most of these churches were very weak, and enjoyed only the occasional services afforded them by the missionaries of the Synod. Messrs. Schermerhorn and Van Vechten spoke dis-

courageously of this field, and though they did not recommend an entire abandonment of it, yet advised the Synod to look to western New York and Pennsylvania as preferable. The Canadian churches were ere long abandoned and the people merged in other denominations.

Churches now began to be organized in western New York. Posts for missionary labor were selected in the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and the Church was earnestly exhorted to come up liberally to the work. But there was a lack of funds and of men. It was impossible to locate missionaries to any extent. Pastors were engaged, and especially candidates for the ministry, to do missionary work for a certain time in a certain district of country. They spent a few days at each station in the district. But it was soon felt that another plan must be adopted, for little could be accomplished in a place by a running visit from a missionary. Settlements must be effected.

An important step was taken in 1822 by the formation of the Missionary Society of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York city, and the recommendation to the churches to form auxiliary societies. This Society was made the Standing Committee on Missions by the General Synod. In 1823 a subordinate northern missionary agency was established in the Particular Synod of Albany, with recommendatory powers, which were afterward enlarged.

In 1830 quite an impulse was given to the cause. Churches were established in prominent towns of western New York, as Utica, Ithaca, Geneva, and the re-

ceipts amounted to nearly \$6,000. The present Board of Domestic Missions was organized in 1831. Its object is the planting of new, and assistance of feeble churches. It has gone on steadily and successfully in the prosecution of this work, and needs only men and means, not opportunities, to do vastly more than it is doing.

In 1836 missions in the Western States were contemplated, and a commission appointed to survey the field. The result was the occupation in a short time of various points in the States of Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. We have now fourteen churches in these States. An interesting field has beside been created by the settlement of Hollanders in the western part of Michigan. They are a devoted people, comprising twenty churches, which form the Classes of Holland and Wisconsin.

On the subject of Foreign Missions no definite ecclesiastical action was taken until the year 1817, although something was previously done for the cause through various societies. At that time the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, and the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, co-operated in the formation of the United Foreign Missionary Society. This continued until the year 1826, when it was merged in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The Synod now recommended its Committee on Missions to begin missionary operations among the aborigines of the country, but it was not prepared to undertake such a work. In 1832 an arrangement

was formed with the American Board, under which our foreign missionary operations have since been conducted. Our Board is auxiliary to that body.

Long before that time Dr. John Scudder had gone from our Church to India, where he labored until 1855, when he was called away by death. Rev. David Abeel had gone to China as Chaplain of the American Seamen's Friend Society, and he has also ceased from his labors. At a somewhat later day, Dr. Cornelius V. A. Van Dyck went to Syria, where he still continues to labor. Soon after the formation of our Foreign Board a missionary spirit was excited in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, and a number of young men devoted themselves to the heathen. The attention of the Board was directed to Netherlands' India, as a proper and inviting field for missionary effort.

In 1836, Rev. Messrs. Elbert Nevius, Jacob Ennis, William Youngblood, Elihu Doty, with their wives, and Miss Azubah C. Condict, sister of Mrs. Nevius, embarked for Java, hoping there to labor and to enjoy Christian intercourse with the missionaries of the Netherlands' Society. They were followed in 1838 by Rev. Messrs. Frederick B. Thompson, and William J. Pohlman, and their wives. But the Dutch government would allow them to settle only on the island of Borneo, and required in every case a year's preliminary residence at Batavia. These brethren were afterward followed by Rev. William T. Van Doren and wife, and Rev. Isaac P. Stryker, in 1839, and Rev. William H. Steele, in 1842. Two stations were established in

Borneo, one at Pontianak on the sea-coast, the other at Karangan, among the Dyaks of the interior.

Messrs. Doty and Pohlman devoted themselves to the study of the Chinese language, and in 1844 went to establish a station at Amoy, one of the free ports of China, where they were welcomed by Rev. Mr. Abeel. Of this whole company, Mr. Doty alone remains. He has since been joined by Rev. John V. N. Talmage and wife, and they are the only missionaries we now have in that part of the foreign field. Rev. J. S. Joralemon and wife are on the way to join them. Messrs. Thompson, Pohlman, and Stryker have gone to their rest. Mr. Ennis has been recalled. Messrs. Nevius, Youngblood, and Van Doren returned on account of ill health. Mr. Steele, after being alone for a long time at Karangan, worn down by labors, and waiting in vain for reinforcements, was directed by the Prudential Committee to return to this country. That station is for the present abandoned. Messrs. Doty and Talmage are laboring at Amoy with remarkable success. The Spirit of God has there been poured out, many have been converted, and many more are thirsting after the Word of Life. The field is white unto the harvest, and the demand for laborers is most urgent.

Progress has been made in India by the formation, lately, of the Classis of Arcot. The lamented Dr. Scudder lived to preside at its organization. Its clerical members comprise three of his sons, and two more with their wives are on their way to join their brothers in missionary labors.

III. OTHER AGENCIES.

In the year 1839, the Board of Sabbath School Union was formed. Its object is to increase the interest in Sunday-schools and to secure as far as possible the teaching of the Catechisms of the Church. Once a year, as many of the schools as can be brought together unite in an anniversary in the city of New York. The power of the Board is simply advisory. It acts in concert with pastors and consistories, and is doing an excellent work in the revival of catechetical instruction. It has published some useful volumes for the young, and done good by the establishment of new schools and encouragement of feeble ones.

In 1854, the General Synod established a Board of Publication, which has with encouraging prospects commenced the work of publishing religious books for circulation in our churches. To recapitulate, we have

I. *The Board of Sabbath School Union*, which aims at the indoctrination of the young.

II. *The Board of Education*, which aids pious indigent young men in preparing for the ministry.

III. *The Board of Domestic Missions*, which establishes new churches, and aids feeble ones in our own country.

IV. *The Board of Foreign Missions*, which carries the Gospel to the heathen.

V. *The Board of Publication*, which aims to spread a sound religious literature through the churches.*

* It may be noted here that the Board of Corporation is the trustee of the Synod to hold its property. There is also a Widow's Fund for

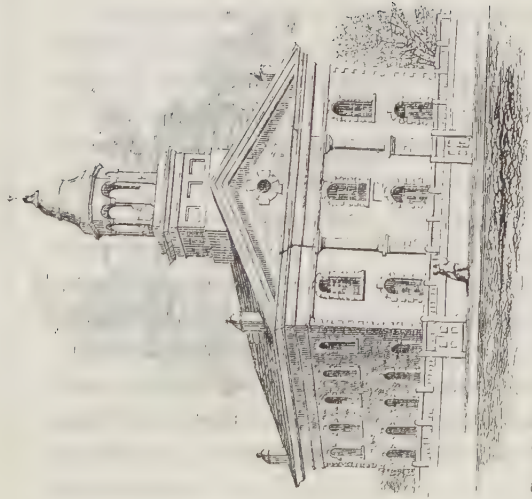
These Boards, in connection with the educational institutions, are the arms of strength of the Church. They are the creations of the present century, and the history of their establishment and growth is the history of the Church during the last fifty years.

When the present century opened, the divisions of past years had been healed. Henceforth, there was gradual, noiseless increase, which it is more pleasant to speak of, than to dwell on exciting scenes of strife. To this, however, it is proper to mention, that there was one exception, though it was happily of a local character. We refer to the secession of the Rev. Dr. Froeligh. He was one of the Professors of Theology appointed in 1797, and a man of eminent theological attainments. Having made himself liable to censure by acts of aggression on a neighboring church, he preferred to secede rather than to submit to the Church authorities. He did so in 1822, taking with him his two congregations of Hackensack and Schraalenberg. A number of ministers joined themselves to him, with fractions of their churches, and thus organized the "True Reformed Dutch Church." They profess to have left the Dutch Church on account of its errors and corruptions.* They, of course, retain the doctrinal

the relief of disabled ministers and the families of deceased ones, an interest in which is secured by certain payments of money. Beside this, a plan has recently been adopted for a sustentation fund, for the relief of ministers or their families, who have failed to secure the benefit of the Widow's fund. The Synod has also taken measures to raise a Church Building fund.

* See "Reasons Assigned by a number of Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, for declaring themselves the True Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America."

standards. They hold no fellowship whatever with any other religious denominations, and decline to co-operate in Bible, Tract, or Missionary effort. As might be expected, they are fast dwindling away. Most of their churches are exceedingly small and feeble. A few are struggling for life in New Jersey, a few in western New York, and one in New York city. This division caused for a season bitter strife in the localities to which it was confined.



South or Garden Street Reformed Dutch Church,
New-York.



CHAPTER VI.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS.

THE great principle of the Reformation was that the sacred Scriptures constitute the only and infallible rule of faith and practice. The Reformers rejected the vain traditions of Rome, and bade all men come to the fountain of the living Word. And yet the Reformers composed their catechisms and confessions of faith, and attached great importance to them. Not that these could be of authority in themselves, but only so far as they exhibited the truth of God. Their authors never encroached on the authority of the Divine Word, but contended that every thing must be tried by the law and the testimony, and yet it does not follow from such a view that creeds and confessions are useless, or are snares to independent and conscientious minds.

They are useful as bonds of union, as the expressions of views on which a number can agree, and which furnish a basis for association. Even of Churches that discard creeds, the members *agree* in discarding them, and their doctrinal foundation or creed is—that they shall have no creed. Besides, in a confession of faith, the truths of the Bible are put into

systematic form, while in the Bible they are announced but not arranged. We find them in narratives, parables, discussions, precepts, proverbs, prayers, and praises. In a confession they are brought together in an orderly and comprehensive summary, so that truth is seen at once, in its unity of design, and harmony of parts.

The era of the Reformation was prolific in confessions of faith, and in catechisms for the indoctrination of the young. Of the former the oldest is the Augsburg Confession, composed by Melancthon for the Lutheran Communion, and it was followed by the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, the Belgic, Helvetic, French, Bohemian, Westminster, Savoy, and other confessions.

The agreement of all these confessions in the fundamental articles of Christian doctrine is wonderful, and worthy of the consideration of the Romanist who is accustomed to reproach Protestantism for its variations. A harmony of these confessions was early published by the Reformed Churches of France and Belgium, and has been here republished by the Presbyterian Board of Publication in a volume entitled the "Synod of Dort."

The doctrinal standards of our Church are three-fold:

I. The Belgic Confession. II. The two catechisms, viz.: the Heidelberg and the Compendium, in which the same is abridged. III. The Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht.

The confession of faith adopted by the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, was called the Belgic, from

the fact that its author, Guido de Bres, who suffered at the stake, was a Belgian. The Reformation very early made progress in Belgium, and that country furnished its full share of martyrs to the truth. It was the head-quarters of the tyrants of Spain and their Inquisitors. The consequence was that the Reformation was crushed there—the Protestants fled to Northern Netherlands, and strengthened the Seven Provinces, and, at this day, no country in Europe is more entirely papal than Belgium.

De Bres composed this confession in the year 1559, and sent it to Adrian Saravia, a celebrated divine, by whom it was sent to John Calvin. Calvin highly approved of it, but as the French churches had just adopted their confession, he thought that it would be better for the Church in the Netherlands to adopt the same, rather than a new one. This was, however, deemed inexpedient. It was sent afterward to other divines for their criticisms, and was at last published, in its present form, in 1562, under the title "Confession of Faith made with Common Accord by the Believers spread throughout all the Netherlands."* It was at once received, and it was acknowledged as a standard by the Synod of Wesel in 1568. It was confirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1618, and by the Articles of Union in this country in 1771, and has remained to this day our confession of faith.

The Heidelberg Catechism was received about the same time by the Church in the Netherlands. Very many catechisms were composed by the divines of the

* T. D. W. in the Christian Intelligencer, Sept. 9, 1852.

Lutheran and Reformed Churches, for the indoctrination of the people, and especially of the young. Of all these, none obtained a greater or more durable reputation on the Continent than the Heidelberg. It was composed in the part of Germany known as the Palatinate, and by order of its excellent sovereign the Elector Frederick III. Lutheranism had hitherto prevailed in the Palatinate, but the Lutheran view of the sacraments was, by some polemics, so strictly and uncompromisingly exhibited as to awaken a strong feeling in favor of the views of the Reformed. The elector himself held moderate views, and could not consent to the extreme literal interpretations of the Lutherans in regard to the presence of Christ in the Supper. Therefore, to compose all differences, and to provide for his people a uniform symbol of faith, he engaged two theologians, Caspar Olevianus, a court preacher, and Zacharias Ursinus, a professor in the University of Heidelberg, to prepare a suitable catechism—one which should not present extreme views, but be calculated to harmonize his people. The work was chiefly if not entirely performed by Ursinus. It was approved by an ecclesiastical Synod at Heidelberg in 1563, from which fact it took its name. Immediately on its publication it met with violent opposition from those who held the extreme Lutheran view in regard to the sacraments, as well as from the Romanists. But with the Reformed Church it met with extraordinary favor, and became an acknowledged symbol of faith in the various countries to which that Church had spread. Switzerland at once received it. It was translated

into French, and held in the highest esteem by the French Church. It was also translated into English, and received with great favor in Scotland and England. The Westminster Assembly in composing their catechisms, nearly a hundred years later, paid special respect to the Heidelberg Catechism. In Hungary and Poland it was also received with honor. Numerous commentaries were written upon it, and translations of it were made into many languages.

Bullinger wrote to a friend, "I have read the Catechism of the Elector Palatine Frederick, with the greatest interest, and have blessed God while doing so, who thus perfects His own work. The arrangement of the book is clear—the matter is true, and beautiful, and good. All is full of light, and faithful, and pious. With the greatest brevity its contents are manifold and large. In my judgment, no better catechism has heretofore been published.*

But from no source has the Heidelberg Catechism received such honor as from the Reformed Church of Holland. It was adopted by the Synod of Wesel in 1568, only five years after its first publication in the Palatinate. It was afterward approved by various Synods, and finally by the Synod of Dort, at which were present many foreign delegates, who cordially commended it. It was divided into fifty-two Lord's days—so that the whole might be expounded from the pulpit once a year.

To use the language of another: "Her temples have resounded with its exposition, and her children have

* Nevin's History of the Heidelberg Catechism, p. 86.

been imbued with its truths for nearly three centuries. The solid bulwarks, which the learning of her Altings, and Hornbeeks, and Hommiuses, and Van Tyls, and a host of other eminent divines, have thrown up around the Protestant faith, were erected, even to the outermost buttress and escarpment, on the outline of the catechism. The heartiness with which she adopted it, and the predominance, which her free institutions, and her vast opulence and power, as well as the learning of her divines and schools, gave her in the seventeenth century, contributed largely to the unparalleled prominence and diffusion of this, her favorite symbol. Holland was indebted to a pure and living faith, for strength to stand up against the most fearful odds ever perhaps successfully encountered by a nation, and ultimately to wrest her liberties from the iron grasp of Philip II., and she sought with grateful ardor to repay the debt. She poured it into the minds of the youth, who resorted from far to her universities, and schools of theology. She taught it to the exiles from England, Scotland, France, and Germany, whom her heroic arm sheltered from persecution. She sent it to her colonies in the East and West Indies, and in fine, she too transmitted it with her emigrant children to America, to experience a freer and wider diffusion after the decay of her own liberties, and (it must be added), the decline of her own polity in the old world.”*

The requirement of the Church of Holland to make a complete annual exposition of this catechism from the pulpit, was long practiced in this country. At the

* Princeton Review, January, 1852.

time of the adoption of the new Constitution, in 1832, the exposition was allowed to take a longer period, but not more than four years.

The Compendium is, as we have seen, an abridgment of the Heidelberg Catechism, and is intended to be used in the instruction of the young, preparatory to admission to the Lord's Supper.

For fifty years, the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism were the only doctrinal standards that the Netherlands' Church possessed. But it will be remembered, that the Arminian controversy resulted in the calling of the national Synod of Dordrecht, in 1618. This Synod condemned the Arminian views, and afterward gave its decisions on the five points in controversy. These decisions are called the Canons of the Synod of Dort, to which the professors of theology, and the ministers of the Gospel in Holland, and in this country, have ever since subscribed.

These doctrinal standards are accessible to all. In all controversies, touching our belief, we appeal to these symbols, and ask that men should hold us responsible only for what is contained in them. This is the only fair course to take, for it is easy to charge that such or such notions are held by a Church—it is easy to misrepresent,—it is easy to take the view of a minister or member, and charge that on the body—but fairness demands a reference to the received formularies of faith. Ours are published to the world, and we only ask a candid examination of them, by the light of Scripture.

Some may object to many doctrines, that they are

incomprehensible, or contrary to their sense of right, or inconsistent with their notions of the Divine character. To such, we say, that we receive the Scriptures as infallible; we will have our standards tried only by the Scriptures, and we believe that the doctrines they set forth are eminently scriptural. Every one of them is fortified by Scripture passages, and they are to be given up only when proven to be inconsistent with the Divine Word.

These standards are undoubtedly *Calvinistic*. By this we do not mean that the Reformed Dutch Church has ever received Calvin as her master, or made him her authority. Nor do we, by any means, receive all that he has written. But the conclusions to which the Netherlands' divines came from the study of the Bible and which they embodied in their confessions, agreed in the main features with the system of doctrine taught by Calvin. Where we consider that Calvin differs from the Bible we oppose him as strenuously as do any others. The Westminster Catechism of the Presbyterian Church—the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, and the Savoy Confession of the Independents, are equally Calvinistic, though Calvin had nothing to do with their formation.

But it has been denied that the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism are Calvinistic. In reference to this we remark that these were composed long before the Arminian controversy, and therefore they do not, like the canons, contain a formal and metaphysical statement of the doctrines of Calvin on the subjects of decrees, redemption, perseverance, etc.

At that time the combatting of error was not in view, but simply the statement of necessary truth. And yet we contend that their genius and spirit are decidedly Calvinistic. The doctrines of grace underlie them both. They exalt God and abase man. They were objected to by Arminius and his followers, who insisted on their revision, and were finally confirmed, without any alteration, by the Synod of Dort, which condemned the opinions of Arminius. This is surely enough to prove that they are in harmony with the decidedly Calvinistic canons adopted by that Synod.

These symbols of our faith were framed with different ends in view, and this makes a marked difference in their characters. 1. The confession of faith was intended to be the basis of organization of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, and consequently it is a complete systematic view of the doctrines of the Reformation.

2. The Heidelberg Catechism was intended to harmonize the Lutherans and Reformed, and thus it is not so much a formal system of doctrine as the account of a true believer's experience.

3. The canons are the precise, carefully-worded views of the Church on the five points in controversy with the Remonstrants.

The confession of faith opens with the doctrines of the unity of God, the means by which He is made known, viz., nature and revelation, the inspiration of the Bible, and its sufficiency as an authority. In the seventh article we read, "We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that

whatsoever a man ought to believe unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. Neither may we compare any writings of men, though ever so holy, with these Divine Scriptures; nor ought we to compare custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times, or persons, or councils, decrees or statutes with the truth of God, for the truth is above all." Thus the Romish doctrine of the authority of tradition is utterly discarded.

Then we find statements of the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, of the creation of all things by God, and of Divine Providence. In reference to this last, it is taught that God has left nothing to chance, but that He rules and governs every thing "according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment; nevertheless, God is neither the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed."

This brings us to the creation, and fall, and recovery of man. He is represented as created holy and good, but as fallen through sin, and now utterly depraved, and darkened, so that he needs Divine help for his recovery. We are taught that this result came through the disobedience of Adam, so that all are infected and condemned, and that the impurity can not be removed by baptism. God is now represented as manifesting His mercy and justice: mercy in saving some, and justice in leaving others in their guilt. He provided a Saviour; the Son became incarnate; was very God, and very man; bore our iniquities; stood as a surety;

and as our High Priest brought in an everlasting righteousness. By receiving Him in the exercise of faith, we are justified, and in justification we are taught are included both the pardon of sins, and the setting of Christ's righteousness to our account as a title to heaven.

Intimately connected with this justifying faith, are the sanctification of the heart and the production of good works. These are exhibited as the invariable fruits of faith, and results of the work of the Spirit, though they are never the ground of our acceptance with God. Then follows the statement of the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the beautiful and touching article on the intercession of Christ.

After this is stated the doctrine concerning the Church. We believe in one holy Catholic (or universal) Church—which is defined as an “holy congregation of true Christian believers.” All are bound to unite with this true Church, no matter what may oppose. It is known, by the maintenance of pure Gospel doctrine, by the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline. The true members are those who are joined by faith to Christ. Hypocrites belong not to the Church, though externally connected with it. The true and false members are admirably distinguished. In short, the view of the Church, given in this article, is entirely opposed to the Popish and High-church view, which makes a certain external organization necessary to the Church, and ascribes inherent power to the sacraments.

As to the sacraments it is taught, that they have no

efficacy of themselves, but are signs and seals of invisible grace, instituted by Christ, and therefore not to be slighted.

Baptism represents the cleansing of the soul by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and is to be applied to infants of believers, by virtue of the covenant. In the Supper, Christ is signified by bread and wine, and as these elements are partaken with the mouth, so is Christ received by faith, for the nourishment of the soul, and thus we are certified of God's love and faithfulness. No air of mystery is thrown over this ordinance, but it is represented as a holy feast in remembrance of Christ, and intended to bind us by faith more closely to Him.

Parts of the article on magistrates are to be interpreted in the light of the sentiments and practice of the age, in reference to the union of Church and State, for the adoption of a State religion bound the government to its protection.

The last article gives the view of the final general judgment, and the eternal glory of the righteous and of the everlasting misery of the wicked.

Such is a rapid glance at the articles of faith contained in the Belgic Confession. In order to understand the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism, and get the key to its meaning, you must imagine a sincere believer as answering from his own experience, the questions proposed. After the introductory question, "What is thy only comfort in life and death?" it is asked: "How many things are necessary for thee to know that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and

die happily?" It is answered: "Three: the *first*, how great my sins and miseries are; the *second*, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the *third*, how I shall express my gratitude to God, for such deliverance."

These constitute the three general divisions of the catechism. The explication of the first occupies the second, third, and fourth Lord's days, and embraces the subjects of the Law of God, State of Integrity, Man's Depravity, Original Sin, and God's Justice in the Condemnation, and Severe Punishment of the Sinner.

The second gives a view of the way of deliverance; and the Lord's days, from the fifth to the thirty-second, are occupied with the explication of it.

First of all, it is maintained that justice must be satisfied, and that the sinner can not make satisfaction for himself, nor can any creature make satisfaction for him; but One, who combines humanity and Divinity is needed, and such a One is found in Jesus Christ. But all, who have perished in Adam, are not *actually* saved by Him, but only such as believe, not with the understanding merely, but with the heart unto righteousness.

Then follow the chief doctrines which faith receives, and they are those found in the apostolic creed. The articles of that creed are then expounded, and followed by the statement of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and a vindication of this doctrine from the charge that it makes men careless and profane.

This is followed by several Lord's days on the sac-

raments, in which the same views are given, as in the Belgic Confession. Very appropriately, the last Lord's day under this head is devoted partly to the subject of Christian discipline—where it is insisted that they, who maintain doctrines, or follow practices, inconsistent with the Gospel, shall be admonished, and if need be, excluded from the communion of the Church, until such time as they repent and amend.

The third and last part of the Catechism explains the manner in which the believer expresses his gratitude to God for his deliverance. He does it not by profession merely, but he expressly acknowledges the obligation resting upon him to perform good works, and that they can not be saved who continue to lead wicked and ungrateful lives. He insists on conversion embracing the mortification of the old man, and the quickening of the new, and resulting in the performance of good works from a principle of faith, and according to the law of God, since only those, that are thus performed, are entitled to be called good works. The remainder of the Catechism embraces an exposition of the Ten Commandments, as a rule of life, and of the Lord's Prayer, as a comprehensive model to assist us in our daily petitions.

The canons of the Synod of Dort were drafted, as we have seen, for a specific purpose, viz., to express the views of the Church on the five points in controversy with the Remonstrants. Calvinistic, of course, they are, but no one has ever found in them the views so often charged upon us, for nothing is more common than for Calvinism to be misrepresented.

It is to be observed that there is a distinction between what is called high Calvinism, and moderate Calvinism, or in theological phrase, Supra-lapsarianism and Sub-lapsarianism. The former regards God as decreeing to make man, and cause him to fall, &c. The latter considers man as fallen, and God decreeing out of His sovereign pleasure to save some from ruin, and to leave others to the just punishment of their sins. The latter is the view of the canons. Whoever reads them, will see the force of the remark of the commentator, Thomas Scott, when he speaks of "the holy, guarded, and reverential manner in which the divines of this reprobated Synod stated and explained these doctrines, compared with the superficial and incautious, and often unholy and presumptuous manner of too many in the present day."

The first of the five points refers to *Predestination*, and this is the popular bugbear of the system. Predestination, according to the article, is not, as is so often represented, God's determination to create some men to be damned, so that they must meet that doom, whether they repent or not. On the contrary, we are taught that no man shall perish, who does not deserve it, because of his impenitence. Men are contemplated as sinners, worthy of hell; condemned already, and entirely dependent on God's interposition for deliverance from the impending doom. Out of this world of condemned sinners, God, of His sovereign pleasure and mercy, chooses to save some. This is Election. The others He has "decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have willfully plunged them-

selves." This is Reprobation. Now, who have a right to find fault? Those who are saved? Surely not, for they are debtors to electing grace. Those who perish? Surely not, for they receive only the deserved punishment of their sins.

The Arminian also holds to Divine election, but he denies that it springs from God's sovereign pleasure, irrespective of any good in the persons elected, and maintains, on the contrary, that it is based on foreseen faith, repentance and good works. But surely that is not according to the Scripture, which represents men to be elected *to* faith, sanctification, and life.

The objection against predestination that, since it precedes a man's birth, it must be most unjust, falls to the ground when we consider that there is no past nor future with God, but only a constant present; nor can the common objection, that divine sovereignty interferes with human liberty and responsibility, be shown to have any force: for no man can do more than prove his own inability to reconcile them. He can not show that they are irreconcilable. As a matter of fact there are no stronger advocates for the position, that man is free to act according to his will, than the most uncompromising champions for the doctrine of Divine sovereignty. And, in truth, what can be more evident than that every man follows his own will both in sinning and obeying. He feels it. He knows it. No man has ever been sensible of the constraining force of God's decree. Divine sovereignty presides over all our affairs, even the minutest, yet who is fettered by it in word or act? We deny not

that there are difficulties connected with this view, but surely they are not greater than those that encompass the opposing one. We must remember that our minds are not divine and infinite; and when disposed with a proud, independent spirit, to sit in judgment on the ways of the Almighty, we should call to mind the admonition of Paul: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that thou repliest against God?"

This doctrine is not to be made a constant subject of preaching, and in harsh manner, but it is "to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy name, and for enlivening and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High."*

II. The second point has reference to the *death* of *Christ*, concerning which, the Arminians held that Christ died in the same sense exactly for all men, and that God is in a certain sense reconciled to all. The canons teach that the atonement was sufficient for the sins of all men, and that its benefits are freely and sincerely offered to all. Nevertheless, Christ in dying had special reference to the salvation of His people. He was their surety. He did not intend merely to open a door by which all might enter and be saved, but also to secure the entrance of many.

III. and IV. The third and fourth points respect the *Corruption of man*, and his *conversion to God*. The

Calvinist and Arminian both believe in the corruption of man's nature, and the need of God's grace for his renovation. But here they differ. The Calvinist regards man as so entirely depraved, that without special grace he never will turn to God, but will perish in his wickedness and without excuse, while they who are saved are debtors to special and distinguishing mercy. The Spirit accompanies the external call of the Word, and inclines to an acceptance of that mercy. The power of the Spirit is irresistible, though we are never forcibly constrained by it, inasmuch as it works upon the affections and will.

The Calvinist represents God as a Sovereign, acting according to His own good pleasure in selecting the subjects of His grace, as well as the time and manner of their regeneration by the bestowment of special Divine influences. The Arminian, on the other hand, says that God has given common grace to all men, which one needs only to improve, as he is abundantly competent to do. According to this, the difference between the converted and unconverted man is this: the former has improved the grace which was given to both equally, and has thus attained to a state of salvation; the latter has not. The Spirit according to this view, never works with such power as to control the will of man, but in conversion the will falls in with the suggestion of the Spirit, which nevertheless it did not need to do.

V. The fifth point has regard to the *perseverance of the saints*. There is no dispute here upon the question what the result must be if a converted man be left

to himself. Every one will admit that he would fall immediately as soon as Divine strength should be withdrawn. All this the Calvinist believes, and he believes, moreover, that the converted man is liable to fall into grievous sins which are offensive to God, and for which he receives correction. Still God does not utterly take away His Spirit. He preserves the incorruptible seed; He renews the erring to repentance; He brings them through every difficulty; blesses His ordinances and dispensations to them, so that they are strengthened to the end, and then receive the unfading crown.

The Arminian, on the contrary, holds that there is no guaranty for the final safety of a believer; that "it is possible for true believers to fall away from true faith, and to fall into sins of such a description as can not consist with a true and justifying faith; nor is it only possible for them thus to fall, but such lapses not unfrequently occur. True believers are capable by their own fault of falling into flagrant crimes and atrocious wickedness, to persevere and die in them, and, therefore, finally to fall away and perish."*

The synopses here given, are intended to be brief. Their meagerness can easily be supplied by a reference to the several symbols contained in our hymn-books. The confession, catechism, and canons, as there contained, are precisely the same as when adopted in the infancy of the Church.

In reference to this doctrinal system, we may remark:

* Articles of Remonstrants.

1. That the Church *is not illiberal* in the terms of communion. In the compendium, which is the preparatory symbol to the communion, all perplexing metaphysical distinctions are avoided. Nor have our people been given to heresy-hunting, and been ready to condemn a man at once for every singular mode of presenting truth. Yet we attach great importance to purity of doctrine, believing that purity of practice depends upon it. Hence the requirement from ministers to expound the Heidelberg Catechism regularly, and also to subscribe a formula in which they declare their belief of the doctrines, and solemnly promise that they will not publicly preach in opposition to them until they shall have made known their change of views to the superior judicatory. Thus heresy can not be introduced by the ministry except by virtual perjury.

2. Our system of doctrine is in *accordance with that* of other *orthodox* Churches, e. g., the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and parts of the Congregational, and Baptist Churches.

3. It is *reasonable*; not that it has no mysteries, for that is not to be claimed for any system. All have their difficulties. But this seems quite as philosophical, and free from objections as any. Its whole tendency is to exalt God and abase man, which is no mean proof of its truth.

4. It is *scriptural*. This, if true, should settle the question. We give our proof-texts, appealing to the law and testimony, and claiming only to have the views set forth by the prophets, apostles, and Saviour. We use no stronger language than they did, in set-

ting forth the sovereignty of God, in grace as well as nature.

5. *It accords with Christian experience.* The believer of every country, and church, and creed, renders thanks to God for having done in him, and for him, what he could not do in and for himself. There is a wonderful harmony in this particular: all the prayers and thanksgivings that men dare use, are Calvinistic.

6. *It is intimately connected with holiness of life.* It was in the days of Paul objected to the doctrine of free justification by faith, that it led to licentiousness, and how ably did he vindicate it from the charge, showing that, so far from nullifying the law, it completely established it, and he and his fellow-disciples gave practical proof of it in their own devoted lives. In every age similar charges have been brought against the doctrines of grace. But men of whom the world has not been worthy, have been men who cherished these doctrines. We point not to the martyrs merely, for error has had her martyrs as well as truth. But consider the men who have walked close with God, and denied themselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and you will find them to have been the men who cherished the doctrines of grace as the apple of the eye. And now, as we wish men to reform and become virtuous and godly, what shall be our course? We shall not dwell on particular vices and virtues, and argue about them on worldly principles, but simply preach the self-humbling doctrine of salvation by God's free grace.

7. *God has honored this truth*, by putting His seal upon it. He has used it for the revival of His work. What was it but its central doctrine of justification by faith, that awakened the new life of the Reformation? What was it but this very system of truth, that produced such marvels in Holland, and in France, and in Scotland, and in England? What doctrines did Whitfield, and Venn, and Hervey, and Berridge, and Romaine, preach in the last century, in England, with such glorious success? What were the doctrines of Edwards, and Davies, and Frelinghuysen, and the Tennents, when God accompanied their preaching with such marvelous power? They dwelt on the doctrines of native depravity, regeneration by the Spirit, and dependence on the sovereign grace of God, for salvation.

And we venture to say that those revivals are of little worth, into which the introduction of these doctrines would produce discord. Where a work is genuine, these truths will be esteemed precious, and found to be of service. The Reformed Dutch Church is no foe to revivals. She has often experienced days of power, but at the same time she has ever guarded against spurious excitements. Nothing is more easy than the production of such excitements. A certain form of preaching, with multiplied meetings, and nicely-adapted machinery, is certain to accomplish the work, and turn out converts by scores. It is sad, sad to think of this; most sad to witness the desolating effects of it on the Church. In how many cases has every green thing been withered, and the Church appeared as a field, over which the fire had passed! How

different the work, where God's living truth is the basis, and the outpoured Spirit is the agent, and many feel the arrow from the Divine quiver, and retire to weep in secret places, and enter into deliberate and solemn covenant with God! These are the seasons to be wished and prayed for, seasons of God's visits to His heritage, owning and blessing His appointed means of grace.

8. This doctrine has ever been the *promoter of civil liberty*. It was the support of the republic at Geneva. Bancroft denominates Calvinism "gradual republicanism," and Geneva "the fertile seed-plot of democracy."* It is a doctrinal system which kings and tyrants have always dreaded, for it claims the right of private judgment in behalf of every man. It led the Huguenot to resist the dragonnades of the French tyrant, and Holland to prolong the contest with Philip, and Scotland to dye her fields with the blood of her sons. It led the Puritans to stand up against kingly and churchly power. And when a place for the nurture of their principles was denied them in the Old World, these stern unyielding men came to the New, to establish "a Church without a bishop, and a State without a king."

And if we desire the perpetuity of our institutions, let us know that all depends on the maintenance of "the truth as it is in Jesus." This, like leaven, must pervade the mass. Then will God appoint unto us salvation for bulwarks.

* Bancroft's "Miscellanies."

CHAPTER VII.

LITURGY, CUSTOMS AND USAGES.

THE Reformed Dutch Church is distinguished from the Presbyterian Church of this country, by the possession and partial use of a Liturgy. This consists of six parts :

I. *Of public prayer*, comprising forms of prayer for ordinary public worship, and also a variety of prayers suitable to other occasions.

II. *Of the administration of the sacraments*, comprising three forms :

1. One for the baptism of infants.
2. One for the baptism of adults.
3. One for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

III. *Of the exercise of Church discipline*, comprising two forms :

1. One for the excommunication of an incorrigible offender.
2. One for the re-admission of a penitent.

IV. *Of the ordination of Church officers*, comprising two forms :

1. One for the ordination of ministers of the Word.
2. One for the ordination of elders and deacons.

V. *Of the celebration of marriage*, comprising one form for the confirmation of marriage before the Church.

VI. *Of comforting the sick*, comprising references to numerous texts of Scripture, arranged under different heads, for the instruction and comfort of the sick and dying. Formerly, as we find in the liturgy in the Dutch language, and also in early English copies, this was quite a lengthy article, entitled "Den Siecken-Troost," or "The Consolation of the Sick, which is an Instruction in Faith and the Way of Salvation, to prepare Believers to die willingly." It was a simple Scriptural view of the work of man's salvation from its beginning to its completion in glory, and was doubtless prepared as a help to the "Kranken-besoecker," or "Siecken-trooster," in his visitations of the sick.

The present practice of our ministers is not at all to use the forms of prayer in ordinary public worship. The same practice prevails in Holland, though both there and here every minister is at liberty to use them. But it is enjoined by the Constitution that the forms for the administration of the sacraments, for the ordination of ministers, elders and deacons, and for the excommunication of offenders, and re-admission of penitents, shall be used when the occasions occur.

In regard to forms of prayer, our Church takes middle ground. She believes in their lawfulness, and that there are occasions when their use is profitable and expedient. She on the one hand avoids the extreme view that it is essential to acceptable prayer that the words should be immediately dictated by the Holy Ghost, and on the other, that it is presumptuous to pray ex-

cept in the words of a prescribed form, especially in public worship. She finds no command of Scripture binding the ministry or Church to the use of forms. Christ gave to the disciples one form of prayer, but who will take the ground that we must always confine ourselves to that? Nor does it appear that the apostles or primitive Christians confined themselves rigidly to forms of prayer in public worship. Lord King describes their usual practice, "first to begin with the Lord's Prayer, as the ground and foundation of all others, and then according to their circumstances and conditions to offer up their own prayers and requests. Now these other prayers which made up a great part of Divine service were not stinted and imposed forms, but the words and expressions of them were left to the prudence, choice and judgment of every particular bishop or minister." He further says, "I do not here say that a bishop or minister used no arbitrary form of prayer—all that I say is, that there was none imposed. Neither do I say that having no imposed form, they unpremeditatedly, immethodically or confusedly vented their petitions and requests, for without doubt they observed a method in their prayers, but this is what I say, that the words or expressions of their prayers were not imposed or prescribed; but every one that officiated delivered himself in such terms as best pleased him, and varied his petitions according to the present circumstances and emergencies, or if it be more intelligible, that the primitive Christians had no stinted liturgies or imposed forms of prayer."*

* Lord King's "Primitive Church," pp. 186, 187.

This affords us an opportunity to say that by extemporary prayer is not meant prayer without forethought, as extemporary preaching is not necessarily preaching without preparation. There may be a careful review of circumstances, arrangement of topics and thoughts, and even the formation of sentences, and the prayer may, to all intents, be prepared for the occasion, and as carefully, as the form written centuries ago. Such preparation for public prayer, may not, without guilt, be neglected by him who is the mouth of the congregation.

The question of forms of prayer is therefore with us, not one of lawfulness but of expediency. The history of the practice of our Church, plainly declares that she thinks their exclusive use entirely inexpedient. They had their origin probably in the inferior attainments of many ministers, and who were greatly aided by them in the performance of their functions. But surely it does not follow that an expedient adopted for the supply of an existing defect, should be enjoined on the ministry as a matter of perpetual obligation, nor should that which was introduced for a help be so clung to, as to make help forever necessary. By no means should we enjoin men whose limbs are sound and strong to walk with crutches, because they are so very useful to the lame. Our Church allows those who feel lame to use crutches, and permits those who do not, to dispense with them.

Besides, a prescribed liturgy can never fully meet the wants of the Church. It is impossible for it to be complete, and always adapted to changing circum-

stances. The prayer composed by a minister for an occasion, may not be as good a piece of devotional composition as some that have come down to us from past ages, but it may be better adapted to the occasion; just as his own sermons may be inferior as compositions to those of Taylor or Hall, and yet better suited to the condition of the people. The same argument by which he is bound to pray in the language of others should bind him also to preach in the language of others.

Yet it may well be inquired, whether we have fallen into the best practice. If the question were between a rigid confinement to forms and entire freedom from them, we should choose the latter. But can we not enjoy the advantages of both form and extemporary prayer in ordinary worship?

Consider, what is public prayer? Does the minister pray for, or in behalf of the people? Not at all; but he is their mouth, expressing their confessions, thanksgivings, and prayers. He must consider their need, and the instructions of God's Word, concerning the objects of prayer, and without regard to his individual, private feelings, must speak for the people. Since there are confessions, thanksgivings, and petitions, that are always appropriate, when the people of God come together, and should never be omitted in public worship, such as confessions of sin, thanks for blessings of providence and grace, prayers for pardon and sanctification, for the sick and bereaved, for those in authority, and for the people, etc., these might be embodied in a form to be always used by the minister. Thus the

offering of them would be secured, and the uniformity of language would be no objection, but the contrary.

In connection with this might be a prayer, or prayers, offered extemporaneously, and in which due notice should be taken of special needs and circumstances. This union of the two, would perhaps meet the wants of the Church as fully as possible, and at the same time, give opportunity for a cultivation of the gift of prayer, by the ministry. This was the practice of the Church of the Netherlands in her early history. She never confined her ministers to the forms entirely, nor did they, in those days, dispense with them in their practice.

Liturgies were early adopted by the Reformed churches in Geneva, France, the Palatinate, England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. When the Puritans arose in England, contending that the Church was only half reformed, and demanding that the reforms should be pushed still further, they were met with persecution. They went naturally, but gradually to the extreme of simplicity in worship, and set their faces against all liturgies, forms, sacred vestments, holy days, kneeling in prayer, etc. The Presbyterians of Scotland, after having received, from the hands of John Knox, a liturgy, which was used* for some time, were so outraged by the attempts of England to force Episcopacy upon them, that they indignantly trampled all forms and liturgies under foot. But the Reformed churches on the continent subjected to no such influences, adopt-

* M'Crie's "Life of Knox," p. 430.—"Eutaxia," p. 127.

ed and retained their forms and customs, and grew in their attachment to them.

Calvin's liturgy was the foundation of the liturgies of the Reformed Church.* The authorship of the several parts of our liturgy is not easily traced.

London may, however, well be called its cradle. The oppressive measures of Charles V., and Philip II., against their Protestant subjects in the Netherlands, drove thousands of them into other countries. Very many of them went to Rhenish Prussia. A number went to Embden in East Friesland, which bordered on Holland, and there formed a church under the auspices of John ALasco, Albert Hardenbergh, and others. On the accession of Edward VI. to the throne of England, the eyes of the Reformed of every land were turned to that country. Many went thither from the Netherlands, and among them a number of members from the church of Embden, who founded a church in Austin Friars, London. This was under the care of ALasco, and four other ministers, and is in existence at the present day. The British reformers took great interest in these refugees, and ALasco, who was of a noble Polish family, and a bishop in Hungary, came over by express invitation of Cranmer, and was made by the king superintendent of the foreign Protestants, who had fled to England.† When bloody Mary ascended the throne,

* Henry's "Life of Calvin," vol. i., p. 412. It was used in the formation of the Book of Common Prayer.—"Eutaxia," p. 190. The reader will be interested in examining it, as found in the instructive volume just quoted.

† For further accounts of ALasco, see Weiss's "History of French Protestant Refugees," vol. i., p. 237.—M'Crie's "Life of Knox," p. 410.

this congregation was dispersed for a season, but on the accession of Elizabeth, the aspect of affairs changed again, and thousands of the persecuted Netherlanders found their way to England. The church in London was revived, and soon numbered more than three thousand members. Churches were also formed in Norwich, Colchester, and other places. These refugees introduced many useful manufactures among the English, and were a most important element in the population.

Forms of worship were at once prepared by ALasco, for the use of the church in London, and subsequently Pollanus, the successor of Calvin, at Strasburg, came with his congregation to England, and having settled at Glastonbury, published a translation of the liturgy, which Calvin had prepared for their use in the French language. ALasco now prepared a new liturgy for the London church, using their old one, and also the translation of the Strasburg Liturgy by Pollanus. This was written in Latin, and corresponds in its outlines with our present liturgy. It was translated into Dutch, in 1551, by John Uytenhove, a distinguished layman, and an elder of the church in London.

The Marian persecution, as we have seen, dispersed the congregation, and drove many of the foreign Protestants back to the continent. Among others, ALasco went to Embden, where the church was revived, and the London Liturgy published. An abridgment of it was made by Martin Micronius, who had been one of the colleagues or assistants of ALasco at London.

Thus far, there was no general church organization

in the Netherlands, and consequently nothing was received by authority. In 1568, such organization was effected by the Synod of Wesel, when principles of polity, doctrinal standards, and a liturgy were adopted. The liturgy adopted by that Synod, was substantially the same as that which had been arranged by ALasco for the church in London, from the various sources to which he had access, and which had been translated by Uytenhove into Dutch, and had been abridged by Micronius, though some parts of it were taken from the liturgy of the Palatinate, which had been published a few years before. This liturgy of the Palatinate owed much to that of ALasco, and also much to that of Geneva.

Thus it will be seen that the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, had in the possession of these formularies a great advantage in arranging her own liturgy, when the time for it arrived. It was prepared by Dathenus,* who also translated the Heidelberg Catechism into Low Dutch, and made the Dutch version of the Psalms from the French of Marot and Beza. The Psalms, catechism, and liturgy were published in one volume, and dedicated by Dathenus "to all the churches and ministers of Jesus Christ sitting and mourning under the tyranny of Antichrist."

* Petrus Dathenus was an eminent minister who, driven by persecution from the Netherlands, had settled with some of his countrymen at Frankenthal, near Heidelberg, in the Palatinate. He associated with the Heidelberg divines, and when the catechism appeared he became its translator into the Dutch language.—T. D. W. in *Christian Intelligencer*, Aug. 26, 1852.

This liturgy contained a short catechism for the examination of those who intend to unite with the Church, for which the "Compendium" was afterward substituted by the Synod of Dort. It also contained only one form of baptism, that which is now denominated "Form for the Administration of Baptism to Infants of Believers." The form for the administration of baptism to adult persons, was added by the Synod of Dort. The article for the "Consolation of the Sick and Dying," was added about ten years after the liturgy of Dathenus had been adopted by the Synod of Wesel.*

The Synod of Dordrecht (1574) directed the liturgy to be used in all the churches. The forms of prayer for ordinary worship were used for a time, never exclusively, but always in connection with extemporary prayer. Gradually, however, they went into disuse, and from the latter part of the seventeenth century have been unknown in public worship in the Fatherland. But the forms for the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for ordination, have continued to be strictly used to the present day. The Remonstrants objected to parts of the liturgy as well as to the confession and catechism. It was revised by the Synod of Dort, anew confirmed, and published under the editorial care of Festus Hommius, a distinguished divine of Holland.

This liturgy was early translated into the English

* The author of "Eutaxia" says that the form for adult baptism was introduced in 1604, and for the consolation of the sick and dying in 1587.—Page 209.

language. Churches were established in Holland in the first part of the seventeenth century by Scotch and English emigrants.* These were ecclesiastically connected with the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, and the liturgy was translated for their use. Three years after the commencement of Dr. Laidlie's ministry in New York (1767), the consistory published an amended edition of the above translation. This translation is the one now in use, and is in the main, faithful, though not always elegant. The subject of a revision of the liturgy is now under consideration by the General Synod.

The forms, for the most part, begin with the Scriptural authority for the act to be performed, which is followed by such questions, exhortations and prayers as are appropriate. It is common for the ministers even of those churches which have no form for the purpose, yet to give an exposition of the sacrament of baptism before administering it. Such exposition is made by our form as concisely as possible, where it exhibits the sacrament as the sign and seal of God's covenant with believers and their seed.

The form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper is worthy of particular notice, and will bear a searching analysis. It opens with the words of institution. Then are stated two things that are necessary to a profitable participation of the Supper. These are 1. Self-examination; 2. The directing of the Supper to the remembrance of Christ.

In self-examination three inquiries are embraced.

* T. D. W. in the Christian Intelligencer, Oct. 21, 1852.

1. Whether we have a sense of our guilt; 2. Whether we rest on Christ's righteousness for forgiveness; 3. Whether we purpose to live henceforth rightly before God and man. All who can bear such examination are counted proper partakers.

Then follows the fencing of the tables, in which those who are guilty of open and scandalous sins are warned against coming to the table of the Lord. To this a qualifying paragraph is added for the encouragement of the penitent, in which it is declared that however numerous and aggravated his sins may be, God will not reject him, if he be sorry for them and resolved to forsake them.

In the second part there is an affecting view of Christ's atoning work, and an exhibition of the relation of the Supper to our faith in that work. Also a careful directing of the attention away from the elements used, to the sacrifice on the cross, and finally, an enforcement of the doctrine of the union of believers with one another, by virtue of their union with Christ, and of the consequent duty of brotherly love.

An appropriate prayer then succeeds, which is followed by the Apostles' creed. This, it is supposed, from the expressions "whereof we make confession with our mouths and hearts," was formerly not only read by the minister, but audibly repeated by the people. May we not at least infer from the place given to this symbol, that in our invitations to members of other churches to commune with us, we should with a most catholic spirit embrace all who can heartily pronounce it?

During the communion an appropriate Psalm may be sung or chapter read. After it, thanksgiving is offered, chiefly in the language of Psalm ciii., and the service is closed with a prayer ending with the Lord's prayer.

Our people who have been accustomed to hear this form from childhood, have become exceedingly attached to it, and the commendation of it by others is common and hearty. It has sometimes been used by our ministers in churches of other denominations, greatly to the satisfaction of the communicants. That its beauty and effects may be fully seen, it must not be abridged and mutilated by the caprice of the officiating minister. Let those who have failed to be affected by it, hear it pronounced in its integrity by one who feels its meaning, and they can not but admire and love it.

In the mode of worship, considerable changes have been made. The following description of the order of worship in the church of London has been translated from an old Dutch author, by Rev. Dr. De Witt. "The congregation being assembled in their house of worship, the minister ascended the pulpit and commenced, with a brief exhortation to the solemn and devout observance of worship. Prayer was then offered according to a prescribed form, the same which is still found in our liturgy, with the title, 'A Prayer before the Explanation of the Catechism.' After this a Psalm was sung. The minister then preached on a portion of Scripture, commonly consisting not of one, two or three verses, but of a continuous paragraph, or a history standing by itself. Thus the minister illustrated,

explained and enforced a whole book of Scripture, as for instance, the Epistle to the Romans in continuance. The sermon or homily occupied about an hour. After this, the minister announced what was proper to be announced to the congregation, but only that which respected public worship. After this a prayer was again offered, according to a prescribed form, which was short and very appropriate. The ten commandments were then distinctly and emphatically read, after which the minister exhorted the congregation to confession of sin, and then offered prayer in penitent confession of sin, and supplication for divine forgiveness, according to a prescribed form, brief and impressive. After this, he read the following declaration: 'Seeing it pleases God to receive in His grace those who are truly penitent and sincerely confess their sins, and, on the contrary, to leave obstinate sinners, who cover and palliate their sins, to themselves, I therefore declare, from the Word of God, to the penitent who believe in Christ alone for salvation, that through His merits alone their sins are forgiven of God. Amen. And to as many as do not confess and forsake their sins, or who, if they confess their sins, seek salvation from any other source than the merits and grace of Christ, and thus love darkness rather than light, I declare from the Word of God, that their sins are bound in Heaven until they repent and turn to Christ.' Immediately after this, the Apostles' Creed was read as bearing the common confession of their faith. Then followed the long or general prayer, either in the prescribed form of the liturgy, or else, at the discretion of the minister,

accommodated to the wants and circumstances of the church. The prayers were concluded with the Lord's prayer. A Psalm was then sung by the whole congregation, led by a chorister placed in front near the pulpit. The minister then commended the wants of the poor to the alms of the brethren, which were collected by the deacons at the door of the church, after the dismissal of the congregation. The benediction was pronounced in the form, 'The Lord bless you, &c.'**

Slight changes from this order were made in Holland. The clerk or voorleser standing in the baptistery (doophuisje), under the pulpit, opened the services by reading a few texts of Scripture, then the ten commandments, and a chapter, and then he read a Psalm, and led in singing it; tablets were hung on the walls, indicating the Psalm to be sung. During the singing, the minister appeared, and having stood a few moments at the foot of the pulpit-stairs in silent prayer, he entered the pulpit. Then followed a few remarks, bearing on what was to be the subject of discourse. This was called the "exordium remotum." Then followed prayer, which was according to form or not, at discretion—then the sermon, which, in early times, was an expository lecture in course. At first, the Apostles' Creed was read after the sermon, but in later times, it was used only in the afternoon service. The sermon in the afternoon was an exposition of one of the Lord's days of the Heidelberg Catechism.

The same order essentially was for many years observed in this country. The following is a description

* T. D. W. in the Christian Intelligencer, Nov. 4, 1852.

of the manner in which worship was conducted in the Church of New York, one hundred years ago. After the preliminary services, which were conducted by the clerk, as described above, "the Dominie arose and made a short prayer, in nearly the following words, 'Our only help and powerful support, we expect alone from Thee, the only and triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Creator of the heavens, the earth, and the seas, and who keepest faith and truth forever. Amen.' He then commenced his exordium remotum with the Apostolic salutation, 'Grace, mercy, and peace, etc.,' and toward the close of it, he frequently added, 'But that I may speak, and you may hear, so that God may be glorified, and our souls edified, it is above all things necessary at the commencement of our meeting to bow the knees of our souls, and call upon Him, who is Spirit, in spirit and in truth in the following manner.' The announcement of the text followed the prayer, and after a suitable introduction, and having shown the connection of the text with the context, he proceeded to divide his subject into general heads, and to supplicate the Divine blessing in a short ejaculation, and then added, 'But before we proceed, we would recommend unto you the poor and necessitous, whom Christ hath left in the midst of us, accompanied with a command to do good unto them. Each of you, my friends, give liberally and bountifully, accordingly as God hath blessed you. Freely think, if it is done from a principle of faith, that God, who seeth in secret, will reward you openly, if not in this life, in that which is to come eternally. The God and Father of

all grace and mercy, incline your hands and hearts to a liberal contribution toward supplying the wants of the necessitous, and may He awaken your attention to what shall be further spoken.* During this address the deacons stood before, and facing the pulpit, each holding the staff in his hand with the bag attached for collecting the alms. When the sermon commenced, the fore-singer turned the hour-glass, which stood near him in a brass frame, and if the sermon continued more than an hour, he turned the hour-glass again, and set it in another place, that it might be seen that an hour had elapsed.† Immediately after the sermon was ended, the fore-singer arose, and by means of a white rod with a cleft in the end, into which the papers were put, handed to the Dominie the requests of those persons who desired the prayers and thanksgivings of the church; of prayers in cases of sickness or other afflictions, in cases of dangerous sea-voyages, etc., of thanksgivings in cases of recovery from dangerous sickness, and in cases of a safe return from sea, etc. At the receipt of these papers, and after overlooking them, the Dominie, addressing the congregation, said, 'As we commence with prayer, it is our bounden duty to close with thanksgiving, remembering in our prayers those who have requested the prayers and thanksgiving of the church' (naming the cases in which they had been desired). After the

* It is the custom in Holland at this day, to collect the alms after the commencement of the sermon.

† The early synods, held in the Netherlands, decreed that sermons ought to be short, not exceeding an hour.

prayer, a Psalm was sung, and the services were closed with the benediction.”*

The present order of worship, commencing with invocation, and closing with the benediction, preceded in the evening service by the doxology, was adopted with the new constitution. The salutation and benediction are taken from Apostolic usage, especially that of Paul, who commences his epistles with a salutation, and closes with a benediction. These differ from the ordinary prayers in public worship. In the latter, the minister stands as one of the people; he includes himself, and is simply their mouth, to present his and their requests to God. In the former, he stands as the ambassador of God, authoritatively pronouncing a blessing in God's name on the congregation, or, if this be questioned, at least, expressing his intercessory wish for them. In the benediction and salutation, according to the usage of our Church, the pronoun is never to be used in the first person, but always in the second, as, “the grace, etc., be with *you*,” not with *us*. Nor are these to be regarded as mere forms, but solemn parts of Divine service.†

The customs of the Church, in reference to the administration of the sacraments, afford materials of interesting history. It has been stated that in the churches first formed in the Netherlands, no children were baptized but those of members in full communion; but that afterward the privilege was extended to the children of such baptized persons as were of good

* Reformed Dutch Church Magazine, vol. ii., p. 275.

† Lardner's Works, vol. ix., p. 403.

moral character. It is optional with consistories among us to adopt whichever mode they think proper. The place of baptism was always the church, unless in case of serious sickness of the parent or child, and the rite was administered during public worship.* This is now the reasonable requirement of the constitution, for if baptism be a form of initiation into the Church, it should be administered before the Church, and if the prayers of the people of God are worth any thing, the child should have the benefit of these prayers. The time has been, when parents walked miles with their offspring, to present them before God, in His house. The appointment of stated times for the administration of infant baptism, with long intervals, as at preparatory lectures, has proved objectionable, for, if parents are prevented from bringing their child, at any one time, they feel obliged to wait until the next season, and often it is entirely neglected.

This sacrament was formerly administered after sermon, now generally before it. Sponsors used to be associated with the parents. This was decided by the Synod of Dort to be a matter of indifference, and they are now dispensed with. There were three sprinklings, one at the mention of each person of the Trinity, as is still the practice of many. Great care was exercised in keeping the register of baptisms. Baptized children were claimed to be under the particular care of the Church, which, in connection with the parents, attended to their religious training.

* Private baptism may be administered only in the presence of an elder. See Constitution.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was at the first observed every two months, afterward four times a year, as is now the general custom. Two weeks' notice was given, and a course of family visitation was performed by the minister with an elder, for conversation with the members and others, in reference to the approaching solemnity. This family visitation before or after communion is still a requirement of our Constitution. Candidates for membership met at the minister's house, and the preparatory service was held a few days before the communion.

On the communion Sabbath, after the usual services, the form was read, and the minister and as many of the members as could, seated themselves at the table before the pulpit. These, having partaken of the elements, gave way for others until the whole church had communed. In the intervals, portions of Scripture were read by the clerk, or an elder. At first, the elders served at the table, but this duty was afterward transferred to the deacons. In the earliest period, in Holland, the communicants, before approaching the table, fell on their knees in their places, and looking upward, offered silent prayer. This custom soon went into disuse. In the after part of the day a thanksgiving sermon was preached, which custom is, we learn, still observed in the mother church in New York.

The writer has a distinct remembrance of the manner in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated under the ministry of Rev. James V. C. Romeyn, at Hackensack and Schraalenberg. The communicants stood at the table, the aged male members taking precedence,

and who, on retiring, were followed by their younger brethren.* The females followed in the same order. Last of all the colored members approached the table. The minister broke the bread as he passed round the table, giving to each one his portion from his own hand, and accompanying it with some remark or quotation from Scripture, often beautifully adapted to the particular case. While the communicants were retiring, and others taking their places at the table, a verse from a hymn was sung.

A very marked characteristic of the Dutch Church from the first, has been her care for the instruction of the young. She was not only zealous to provide the university for the education of her ministers, but also the parish school for the instruction of all children. Christian nurture was regarded as the chief means for perpetuating the Church, who looked upon her baptized children as taken into covenant with God, and to be trained for him, that at a suitable age they might make a sincere profession of their faith in Christ. She did not look to periodical excitements, nor even chiefly to adult conversions for an increase of a godly seed, but to the Divine blessing on the careful indoctrination and training of the young. Infant baptism in connection with such nurture, had an important meaning, which now, alas! is almost entirely lost sight of. We have gained but little by exchanging the strong faith of our fathers, that God would renew, and through

* It was decided very early that communicants might stand or sit at the table, but the kneeling posture was disapproved, as tending to a superstitious reverence for the elements.

Christian training sanctify the child, for the vague hope that He may suddenly convert it in mature years. The practice of the Church corresponded in those days with the theory. The Synod of Dort decreed on this subject as follows :

“ In order that the Christian youth may be diligently instructed in the principles of religion, and be trained in piety, three modes of catechizing should be employed. 1. In the houses, by parents. 2. In the schools, by schoolmasters. 3. In the churches, by ministers, elders, and catechists, especially appointed for the purpose. That these may diligently employ their trust, the Christian magistrates shall be requested to promote by their authority so sacred and necessary a work; and all who have the oversight of churches and schools shall be required to pay special attention to this matter.

“ 1. The office of parents is diligently to instruct their children, and their whole household, in the principles of the Christian religion, in a manner adapted to their respective capacities; earnestly and carefully to admonish them to the cultivation of true piety; to engage their punctual attendance on family worship, and take them with them to the hearing of the Word of God. They should require their children to give an account of the sermons they hear, especially those on the Catechism, assign them some chapters of Scripture to read, and certain passages to commit to memory, and then impress and illustrate the truths contained in them, in a familiar manner, adapted to the tenderness of youth. Thus they are to prepare them for being

catechized in the schools, and by attendance on these to encourage them, and to promote their edification. Parents are to be exhorted to the faithful discharge of this duty, not only by the public preaching of the word, but specially at the ordinary period of family visitation, previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper; and also at other proper times, by the minister, elders, etc. Parents who profess religion and are negligent in this work, shall be faithfully admonished by the ministers, and if the case requires it, shall be censured by the consistory, that they may be brought to the discharge of their duty.

"2. Schools, in which the young shall be properly instructed in the principles of Christian doctrine, shall be instituted not only in cities, but also in towns and country places, where heretofore none have existed. The Christian magistracy shall be requested, that well-qualified persons may be employed, and enabled to devote themselves to the service, and especially that the children of the poor may be gratuitously instructed, and not be excluded from the benefit of the schools. In this office none shall be employed but such as are members of the Reformed Church, having certificates of an upright faith and pious life, and of being well versed in the truths of the Catechism. They are to sign a document professing their belief in the confession of faith, and the Heidelberg Catechism, and promising that they will give catechetical instruction to the young in the principles of Christian truth according to the same. The schoolmasters shall instruct their scholars, according to their age and capacity, at least

two days in the week, not only by causing them to commit to memory, but also by instilling into their minds an acquaintance with the truths of the Catechism. For this end three forms of the Catechism adapted to the threefold circumstances and ages of the young, shall be used. The first shall be for the young children, comprising the Articles of Faith, or Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Institution of the Sacraments, and Church discipline, with some short prayers, and plain questions adapted to the three parts of the Catechism. The second shall be a short compendium of the Catechism of the Palatinate (or Heidelberg), used in our churches, in which those who are somewhat more advanced than the former, shall be instructed. The third shall be the Catechism of the Palatinate (or Heidelberg), adopted by our churches for the youth still more advanced in years and knowledge. The Walloon churches of the Netherlands, who have long been accustomed to the use of the Genevan Catechisms, may still continue them in their schools and churches, but the schoolmasters shall not employ any other formularies than these in their schools. The magistrates shall be requested to exclude from the schools all Popish Catechisms, and all other books, which contain errors and impurities. The schoolmasters shall take care, not only that the scholars commit these Catechisms to memory, but that they suitably understand the doctrines contained in them. For this purpose they shall suitably explain the topics to every one in a manner adapted to his capacity, and frequently inquire, if they are understood. The

schoolmasters shall bring every one of the pupils committed to their charge, to the hearing of the preached word, and particularly the preaching on the Catechism, and require from them an account of the same.

“3. In order that due knowledge may be obtained of the diligence of the schoolmasters and the improvement of the youth, it shall be the duty of the ministers, together with an elder, and if necessary with a magistrate, to visit all the schools, private as well as public, frequently, in order to excite the teachers to earnest diligence, to encourage and counsel them in the duty of catechising, and to furnish an example by questioning them, addressing them in a friendly and affectionate manner, and exciting them to early piety and diligence. If any of the schoolmasters should be found neglectful or perverse, they shall be earnestly admonished by the ministers, and if necessary by the Consistory, in relation to their office. If these exhortations produce no effect, the magistrates shall be requested to exercise their authority in leading them to the discharge of their duty, or to appoint others more qualified and faithful in their places. The ministers, in the discharge of their public duty in the Church, shall preach on the Catechism.* These sermons shall be comparatively short, and accommodated, as far as practicable,

* It was required that the sermon on Sunday afternoon, should be an exposition of one of the Lord's days of the Catechism. Thus the whole Catechism was expounded in the course of the year. By the new Constitution, ministers in this country are now allowed to occupy four years with this work.

to the comprehension of children as well as adults. The labors of those ministers will be praiseworthy who diligently search out the wants of country places, and see that catechetical instruction be supplied and faithfully preserved. Experience teaches that the ordinary instruction in the Church, catechetical and other, is not sufficient for many to instill that knowledge of the Christian religion which should, among the people of God, be well grounded; and also testifies that the living voice has very great influence, and that familiar and suitable questions and answers adapted to the comprehension of each individual, is the best mode of catechizing, in order to impress the principles of religion upon the heart. It shall be the duty of the ministers to go with an elder to all capable of instruction, and collect them either in their houses, the consistory chamber, or some other suitable place (a number, particularly of those more advanced in years), and explain familiarly to them the articles of the Christian faith, and catechize them according to the circumstances of their different capacities, progress and knowledge. They shall question them on the matter of the public sermons on the Catechism. Those who desire to unite with the Church shall, three or four weeks before the administration of the Lord's Supper, be frequently and more carefully instructed, that they may be better qualified and be more free to give a satisfactory account of their faith. The ministers shall employ diligent care to ascertain those who give any hopeful evidence of serious concern for the salvation of their souls, and invite them to them, assembling together those who have like impres-

sions, and encouraging them to friendly intercourse and free conversation with each other. These meetings shall commence with appropriate prayer and exhortation. If all this shall be done by the ministers with that cordiality, faithfulness, zeal and discretion that become those who must give an account of the flock committed to their charge, it is not to be doubted that in a short time abundant fruit of their labors shall be found in growth in religious knowledge, and holiness of life to the glory of God, and the prosperity of the Church of Christ."*

When the Church was brought to this country, this system of Christian education came with her, and the schoolmaster was considered almost as necessary as the minister. In new settlements he usually preceded the minister, and was required, in the capacity of *voorleser*, to conduct public worship, by reading a sermon and leading in devotional exercises. Here, as in Holland, the church and school-house stood side by side. After a season, when the communities became more heterogeneous, and especially after the establishment of common schools, the system of parish schools was gradually abandoned.†

In 1809 an unsuccessful attempt was made by the General Synod to revive the whole system established by the Synod of Dort.‡ Lately the Assembly of the

* Acts of the Synod of Dort.

† The school established in connection with the church in New York in 1633, is still in existence. See its interesting history by Henry W. Dunshee, New York, 1853.

‡ Minutes of General Synod.

Presbyterian Church (Old School) has gone with some zeal into the work of establishing parochial schools. In 1854 our General Synod adopted a system for parochial schools, and recommended their establishment wherever it might be found practicable. A few schools of this character have gone into successful operation, aided in their incipient efforts by the munificence of a member of our Church.

But though we may not be able everywhere to carry out the second part of the plan of the Synod of Dort, the scholastic training, yet we are committed to the instruction of the young. The two other parts can be carried out. Heads of families, if they are so disposed, can do their duty, and let them know that no privileges which their children may enjoy abroad can compensate for a neglect of faithful training under the parental roof. There is now a loud call for the revival of the good old custom of regular catechetical instruction in the family. The ecclesiastical part of the plan can be carried out. Ministers and consistories must do their duty. Greatly does the pastor err who is content to have no hold on the young, and deems catechetical instruction well enough if convenient, but not of the utmost importance. An excellent opportunity is afforded by the Sunday-school for the officers and members of the Church to exercise their gifts in feeding the lambs of Christ's flock. They ought not to allow this precious work to be done by any hands into which it may happen to fall, but should be as careful in the selection of teachers for their children in religious truth, as of pastors to preach to them from the pulpit.

In public worship it is allowed to sing only such Psalms and hymns as have been recommended by the General Synod. The effect of the introduction of Psalm-singing by the congregation in Reformation times, must have been wonderful. The Psalms were translated by Marot and Beza into the French language, and sung in the churches, and even at the courts of Francis I., Francis II., and Catherine.* Of this French version a translation in Low Dutch was made by Petrus Dathenus, which was used in the churches of the Netherlands, and also in this country until 1773, when a new version was adopted. The Psalms, as also the Lord's Prayer, creed, commandments, songs of Simeon, Zacharias, Mary, and a few prayers were set to music, which was printed with them for the convenience of the worshipers, and bound with the New Testament. Copies of this volume are to be found in every old Dutch family, many of them gilded and elegantly bound, and furnished with clasps and chains of gold or silver, so that the ladies might conveniently carry them to church suspended from their arms. After the introduction of English preaching, an amended edition of Brady and Tate's version, which was used in the English churches in Holland, was published (1767) by the consistory of the Church of New York. The established music was retained and the rhyme adapted to it.

In 1789, Rev. Dr. Livingston compiled a book of Psalms and hymns in English, which was used until 1813. At that time, he, by request of the General

* Henry's "Life of Calvin," vol. i., p. 414.

Synod, compiled a new book which was adopted and introduced into worship. The hymns in that collection were afterward called Book I. In 1830, an additional number of hymns was adopted, called Book II. In 1846, another addition was made, and also a new arrangement adopted, whereby the hymns are placed in classes, and numbered without regard to book. In 1843, a collection of hymns for Sunday-schools and social worship was adopted and published.

It is worthy of notice, that in the Church of the Netherlands singing has ever been regarded the duty of the whole worshipping assembly. It was long considered so in this country, and even at this day the choir is in theory the leader in the praises of the congregation, but in practice, alas! a committee delegated with full powers to attend to that part of worship.

The churches in the Netherlands, and also for a long time in this country, observed the feasts of Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday, commemorative of the birth and resurrection of the Saviour, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In addition to these, the circumcision and ascension of Christ were commemorated in many churches, and it was customary to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on Christmas day and Easter Sunday. But the action of the various synods clearly shows that these days were not regarded as of Divine institution, but that since they were commonly observed by the people, it was thought best to turn them to edification, and make them promotive of good instead of evil. Thus the first Synod held at Dordrecht, in 1574, decreed

(article 53), "concerning the feast-days on which, beside the Sunday, it has been customary to abstain from labor, and assemble in the church, it is resolved that we must be satisfied with the Sunday alone. However, the usual subjects on the birth of Christ may be handled in the churches on the Sunday before Christmas, and the people be admonished of the abolition of the feast-days. The same subjects may also be handled on Christmas, when it falls on a preaching-day. It is also left to the discretion of the ministers to preach on the subjects of the Resurrection of Christ, and the Sending of the Spirit on Easter and Whitsunday." The Synod held at Middleburg, 1581, decreed (article 50), "The congregations shall petition their magistrates, that the feast-days, excepting Sunday, Christmas, and Ascension, may be abolished. But in places where by order of the magistracy, more feast-days shall continue to be observed, the ministers shall endeavor by preaching, to change unprofitable and hurtful idleness into holy and edifying exercise." The Synod held at the Hague, 1586, decreed (article 60), "The congregations shall, beside the Sunday, observe Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday, and in places where most of the feast-days, in commemoration of the benefits of Christ (as the Circumcision and Ascension), are by order of the magistrates observed, the ministers shall endeavor by preaching to change the idleness of the people into holy and edifying exercise." The Synod of Dort (1618), decreed (article 67), "The congregations shall besides Sunday observe Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and the day following; and since in most of the

towns and provinces of the Netherlands, the feasts of Circumcision and Ascension are also observed, the ministers in all places, where this is not customary, shall labor with the magistrates for the establishment of conformity with the others."

We have quoted these successive decrees in order to show the history of ecclesiastical action on this subject. At first it was clearly the intention to abolish these days entirely. Then it was deemed better (as the people continued to take them for holidays), to turn them to a good account by the holding of religious services, and finally their observance was enjoined, doubtless on the ground of edification. Probably the magistrates, who are continually referred to as having authority in the matter, did not, for reasons springing out of the circumstances of the times, and the genius and habits of the people, deem it expedient to abolish them. While they continued by authority, the Church rightly aimed to make them promotive of piety. She brought them to this country as parts of her institutions, and the memory of many, now in middle life, can easily go back to the days in which they were wont on Christmas to accompany their parents to the house of God, and when on Easter and Whitsunday the subjects appropriate to those days were always handled by the preacher.

It will readily be seen that in some particulars the Reformed Churches of England and of the Netherlands assimilated. This was to be expected, for the countries were closely allied—there was much intercourse between them—they were mutual helps in com-

mon troubles—they fought in the same battles for the defense of Protestantism against Spanish bigotry. They alike observed the holy days, adopted a clerical costume, received the creeds, used liturgical forms, and the diocesan bishops of the English Church took their seats with the parochial bishops of the Dutch Church in the Synod of Dort.*

Feast-days, and gowns, and liturgies, the Puritans regarded as so many rags of popery. When at Leyden, they tried to enlighten and reform the Dutch in regard to them, but they, with characteristic obstinacy, would not be converted to their notions. The Dutch deemed these to be non-essentials, while the Puritans treated them as very grave matters. The Dutch respected their English guests and would gladly have kept them among them, but they felt irresistibly compelled to

* In the new light on the doctrine of the Church, now enjoyed, we look upon reminiscences like the following as we do on the fossil remains of some creature of an extinct species:

“Rev. Mr. Vesey, the first rector of Trinity church in the city of New York, was inducted in office in December, 1697, in the Dutch church in Garden street. On that occasion, two Dutch clergymen, the Rev. Mr. Selyns, the pastor of the church, and the Rev. Mr. Nucella, of Kingston, assisted in the services. Mr. Vesey afterward officiated for some time in the Garden street church alternately with the Dutch clergyman, until the building of Trinity church was completed. When the Middle Dutch church was desecrated by the British during the revolutionary war, the vestry of Trinity church passed the following resolution in 1779: ‘It being represented that the old Dutch church is now used as a hospital for his Majesty’s troops, this corporation impressed with a grateful remembrance of the former kindness of the members of that *ancient church* do offer them the use of St. George’s church to that congregation for celebrating divine worship.’ The courteous offer was frankly accepted.”—Brodhead, note, p. 119.

seek a home in the new world, where they might have a more encouraging field for the development of their cherished principles.

The Church has always disapproved of laudatory discourses at the burial of the dead. Under the influence of this feeling, the Synod of Dort ordered that—"where funeral sermons are not in use, they shall not be introduced, and where they have already obtained, endeavors shall be used to abolish them in the best manner possible."* In the explanatory articles the above rule is re-affirmed, but it is added, "as it is often found to answer a good purpose to speak a word of exhortation at the time of funerals, the right of addressing the people upon such occasions is left to be exercised by every minister at his own discretion."†

Desires have often been expressed for a burial service. Dr. Livingston arranged passages of Scripture to be read at funerals. The committee on the liturgy has recently submitted to the Synod a service for the burial of the dead, on which action has not yet been taken.

* Acts of Synod of Dort, Art. 65.

† Old Constitution, pp. 191, 235.

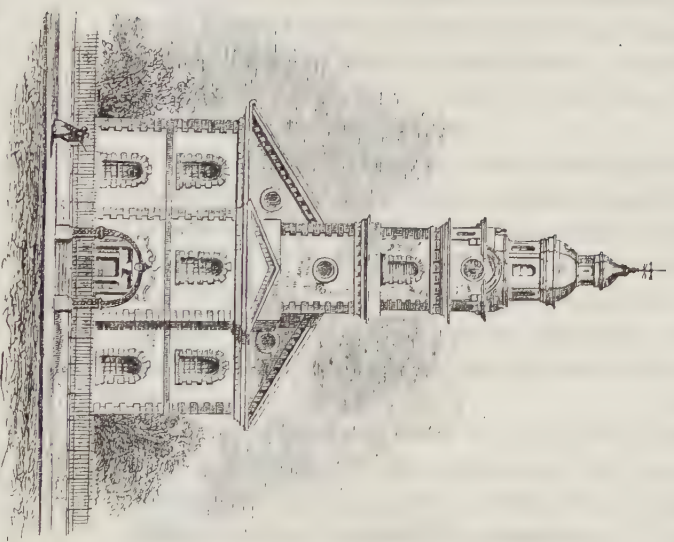
CHAPTER VIII.

GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE.

THE Church of God is to be contemplated under two aspects: firstly, as invisible; and secondly, as visible. The invisible Church is composed of the subjects of grace alone, and therefore is known only to God. The visible is an external organization with officers, laws, and ordinances.

The question whether any one form of Church government has been carefully defined, and authoritatively enjoined by the New Testament, and which is of the essence of the Church, we unhesitatingly answer in the negative. We have no regular Church Constitution drafted by Christ or His Apostles. They have left no clearly-defined pattern, to which we must conform or forfeit the title of Church, nor is it to be believed that there is any Church in existence precisely like the simple organizations of the primitive disciples.

But we have great principles announced on this subject, we have general features of Church order, and we have accounts of officers and their functions, of discipline, and of assemblies. By the aid of these we may construct a theory of the Apostolic Church Constitution, to which we shall feel obliged to conform, as far



North Reformed Dutch Church, corner of Fulton and
William Streets, New-York

as circumstances will allow. The fact that so little has been said on this subject in the way of command, leads us to the conclusion that, while the general principles are unchangeable, particular features may be regulated by Christian expediency.

Romanism takes higher ground, contending that Christ gave to Peter authority over the other Apostles, and intended that he should be followed by a succession of Popes as heads of the Church. Consequently, to deny the Pope is to be out of the Church, and so out of the way of salvation.

High-church Episcopacy also takes higher ground. It affirms that a particularly defined Church constitution is established by the New Testament and primitive tradition, the chief feature of which is a threefold order in the ministry. A Church must have bishops, priests, and deacons in regular Apostolic succession, and without these, all sacraments and ordinances are invalid.

Low-church Episcopacy says, on the other hand, that it prefers this government as the best on the whole, and, perhaps, even believes that it was established by the Apostles, but allows that it is not essential to the Church, but that the true Church of Christ may exist under other forms, and that the ordinances of other bodies of Christians are not a mockery, but acceptable sacrifices.

Before the Reformation, Europe was completely under the dominion of Popery. When the light came, that yoke was thrown off, and the assertion of the right of private judgment, and of the vital doctrine of justi-

fication by faith was followed by new forms of Church order. The two principal of these were the Episcopal and Presbyterian forms. Independency arose afterward out of the feeling that the Reformation had not been carried far enough, that ecclesiastics could not be trusted to finish it, and that the people must take the matter into their own hands. The Anabaptists rose in Germany against spiritual and political oppression, but they were ignorant and fanatical, and ran into many excesses. Far different were the Puritans who rebelled against the English hierarchy. They were men of knowledge, and faith, and determination. They pushed the democratic principle in the Church to the extreme, making each congregation independent of all others, and asserting for the people as a body the right of ordination and discipline.

Luther, in his Church government, worship, and usages, was unwilling to go further from Rome than was necessary. He would have continued to acknowledge the Pope, if the Pope would only have allowed him to preach the doctrine of justification by faith, but that was impossible. Driven out of the Papal Church, he was obliged to provide a new organization for his followers.

In England, Henry VIII. was not in heart for the Reformation. He at first opposed Luther, and forsook the Pope only when the Pope refused to give him such a decision as he wished on the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow, Catharine of Arragon. He would not go a step further in the Reformation than he felt compelled to do for the advancement

of his own purposes. Although the Protestant doctrine had spread to some extent among the people, yet what is known in history as the English Reformation, was carried on chiefly by the king, government, and ecclesiastics. Hence the hierarchy was retained, the king took the place of the Pope as head of the Church, and imposing Church ceremonies were adopted. The people fell in with this order, and became the subjects of an Episcopal establishment.

It was entirely different on the Continent. There the people ran after the Word of God first, and princes and priests followed. By reason of persecution, the Reformed could not at once attain to perfect organization. They were obliged to worship stealthily. But as the effect of persecution, they were determined, when the time came for organization, to have much of the popular element in the Church constitution, and much of simplicity in public worship.

At Geneva, Farel, and afterward Calvin, who completed the constitution of the Church there, went as far as possible contrary to Popery. Yet Calvin retained the conservative element. He avoided the extreme of independency on the one hand, and of ecclesiastical despotism on the other. The result of his labors was the establishment of the Presbyterian form of Church government, which was soon introduced into France, Holland, Scotland, and other countries. It was seen most favorably in its practical workings in France, for there the Protestant Church was entirely separate from the State.

In the Netherlands, as we have seen, the Reforma-

tion rose and spread among the people. On account of the persecuting measures of the government, public assemblies or synods could not be held immediately. Still we have reason to believe that very early single congregations were formed on the Genevan model. At the synod held by the "churches under the cross," in 1568, at Wesel, because of the troubles in the Netherlands, a system of Church polity was adopted.

The nobles at first continued to adhere to the Roman Church, though they resisted the tyranny of Spain. Those of them who favored the Reformation, would have preferred Episcopacy, and so would many of the ministers. Bishop Hall, in his account of the Synod of Dort, says, "When the Bishop of Llandaff had, in a speech of his, touched upon Episcopal government, and showed that the want thereof gave opportunity to those divisions which were then on foot in the Netherlands, Bogermanus, the President of that assembly, stood up and in a good allowance of what had been spoken, said, 'Domine, nos non sumus adeo felices,' Alas! my lord, we are not so happy."*

But the people remembered how they had struggled for their rights, and they remembered too, how Philip had made the hierarchy his chosen instrument for their oppression, and had created new bishops for the purpose of crushing their liberties. They, consequently, would never have submitted to a Church organization in which the republican element was not predominant.

Full and complete rules of Church government were adopted by the successive Synods, and finally revised

* Bishop Hall, x., 51.

and confirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1619. These were, in the main, adopted in this country when the Church was fully organized in 1792. A number of explanatory articles were at the same time added. For a century and a half nearly, there had been no higher body than a consistory. Then the advisory body called the Coetus was formed. Then came the Articles of Union in 1772, providing for the establishment of five Particular Assemblies and one General Assembly, the latter to be composed of delegates from the former. These were afterward called Classes and Particular Synods, and then a General Synod was formed which was at first composed of all the ministers in the Church, with an elder from each church, and met once in three years.* This was afterward made a delegated body, and in 1812 it was resolved that its sessions should be annual. In 1832, the rules of Church order and the explanatory articles were revised, and the result was the new or present constitution of the Church. This constitution speaks,

I. OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

1. *Ministers of the Word.*—We have seen that the Church has always regarded a well-qualified ministry as indispensable. Let us then look at the process through which one who aims at the sacred office must pass. Having completed a preparatory academical or collegiate course of study, he presents himself before a committee of ministers which meets annually at the

* Explanatory Articles, 54, 55.

opening of the Theological Seminary. If they are satisfied of his piety, views in desiring the ministry, and literary attainments, he is admitted into the institution. The course of study there occupies three years under three professors. At the close of each year he submits to an examination before the Board of Superintendents, which is composed of one minister from every classis. This Board has power to put any student back, or to dismiss him for sufficient cause. If he pass the final examination, he is furnished with a certificate from the professors which entitles him to an examination for licensure by the classis to which the church of which he is a member belongs. After licensure he may preach as a candidate for the ministry, but can not administer the sacraments nor be a delegate to ecclesiastical bodies. He exercises his gifts before the churches. If any church desires his services as pastor, a call is made, which is presented to the classis for approval, and then placed in his hands. If he accept it, he must pass an examination for ordination by the classis to which the church that has called him belongs. This being sustained, he signs a formula in which he solemnly engages to preach the doctrines of the Church, and if contrary sentiments should afterward arise in his mind, that he will not teach them until he shall have submitted them to the consistory, classis, or synod for examination, and if at any time, any one of those bodies, suspicious of his orthodoxy, shall ask of him an explanation of his sentiments, he will readily give it. His name is then published for three successive Sabbaths to the congre-

gation, to give opportunity for objections to be presented, if there be any, against his ordination, on account of his life or doctrine. He is finally ordained by the laying on of hands by the ministerial members of the classis. This ceremony is never repeated, for he is ordained only once to the ministry, though he must be installed as pastor as often as he removes to a new field of labor.

The minister is required to give himself to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, to dispense the sacraments, to watch over the elders, and deacons, and whole congregation, to unite with the elders in the exercise of discipline, to catechize, to visit the sick and others, and in short, "by word and example, always to promote the spiritual welfare of his people."

He is bound to the sanctuary as long as he lives, and may turn to a secular calling only for great and important reasons of which the classis must judge. His dismissal from his pastoral charge can not be effected without the consent of the consistory and the approbation of the classis. When by reason of age, habitual sickness, or infirmities of mind or body, he becomes disqualified for the active work of the ministry, the classis may declare him *emeritus*, or honorably release him from service, while his previous title and standing as a minister, are continued.

Every minister is a bishop or overseer, equal to his brethren in official rank and power. Whatever distinctions exist in the ministry, are made by position, character, or attainments. That the pastor corresponds to the bishop of the New Testament, all Epis-

copal writers of respectability admit; for they claim that diocesan bishops are successors not of the New Testament bishops, but of the Apostles. This we deny on the grounds that the Apostleship was a temporary office, that the Apostles were ordained to be *witnesses* of Christ's resurrection, and that it was necessary that they should be men who had with their bodily eyes seen the risen Saviour. How can a bishop of the present day have that essential qualification of an Apostle, unless Christ specially reveal Himself to him as He did to Saul of Tarsus?*

Great care is exercised in the admission of ministers from other denominations, or from foreign countries. The former must pass an examination by the Classis, the latter must in addition spend one year of probation before they can be fully received.

2. *Professors of Theology*.—These are taken from the ranks of the ministry, and elected by a majority of the votes in the General Synod. Nominations must be made previously to the day of election, in order to guard against undue haste. Professors are chosen for life, and their office can be vacated only by discipline, resignation, or death. They are amenable directly to the General Synod, are debarred from holding pastoral charges, and are required to devote themselves wholly to the work of teaching their students. They may, however, preach and administer the sacraments when invited by a pastor or consistory. They are not allowed to sit as members of classis or synod. In this respect our practice differs from that of the Presby-

* Acts, i. 21; x. 41; Gal. i. 1.

terian Church, whose professors often appear as members of ecclesiastical assemblies.

3. *Elders and Deacons.*—The elders have the spiritual oversight of the church in connection with the ministers of the Word. In every Apostolic and primitive church we believe that there was a bench or council of elders, who did not preach but ruled in the church. Thus we read, "Let the elders that *rule* well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."*

The elders have duties to discharge toward the minister. They must see that he preach no false doctrine. If he does they must kindly admonish him, and if that avail not, complain of him to the classis. They must watch his walk and conversation, and advise him of any faults or indiscretions that interfere with his usefulness. If he should be charged with any scandalous crime, they may close the church against him, and demand an investigation from the classis. They must also co-operate with him in all plans for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. He depends on them not only for advice, but for zealous assistance, instead of cold and negligent assent to good measures.

They have duties to discharge to the church. It is their prerogative, with the minister, to admit members into full communion. To them belongs the oversight of the members. They must instruct, admonish, or comfort them, as the case may require. They should tenderly warn such as become negligent, heal divis-

* 1 Tim. v. 17.

† Formerly, the giving of the hand by the elders to the minister, after sermon, signified approbation of its doctrine, while the withholding was expressive of dissent.

ions, and endeavor to reclaim backsliders. For these ends it is enjoined that they visit the congregation, and before every communion, they are solemnly asked, according to an express provision of the Constitution, whether they know of any who have departed from the faith or walked unworthily.* They may also be sent as delegates to the classes and synods, in which bodies the deacons never appear.

The history of the appointment of the first deacons, we have in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Apostles being unable to give proper attention to the wants of the poor, seven men were appointed for that business, and called deacons. This is the special function of the deacon now as distinguished from the elder. He collects the alms, he searches out the needy, and administers to their necessities. In this distribution the needy members of the Church, in which the alms have been collected, have the preference. After them the wants of poor saints in other churches, and needy strangers, are attended to. Since provision has been made by law for the relief of the poor, and mutual aid societies have been multiplied, this office has not appeared with due prominence before the world. Still it is acknowledged throughout our communion to be the duty of every church to relieve its indigent members. The churches in Holland have always been famed for their liberality to the poor.

Three modes of electing elders and deacons are allowed by the Constitution. All of them recognize the

* By the early Synods of the Netherlands it was enjoined that every elder should have oversight of a particular district and report weekly to the consistory whatever demanded their attention.

rights of the people. In the first, the acting consistory chooses successors to those who are about to retire from office. In the second, the male communicants select from a double number of nominations made by the consistory. In the third, the male communicants nominate as well as elect, without any interference from the consistory.

The names of the persons elected must be published on three successive Sabbaths to the congregation. Thereby an opportunity is afforded to any member to present objections, and if valid ones be presented, the election must be set aside. This is an important check to the abuse of power.

A peculiar, and, as we think, happy feature in our system, is that these officers are chosen for a limited time, viz., two years. In every year the terms of office of one half of the members of the consistory expire, but an immediate re-election is lawful, if it be thought advisable. This feature of limited terms was adopted in the earliest period of the history of the mother Church in the Netherlands. In the Presbyterian churches of America the elders have, until lately, been invariably chosen for life, but in some churches the principle of a limited term of office is now acted upon. The following are some of the advantages of this plan:

1. It affords relief. Sometimes the duties of these offices press heavily, and become burdensome, especially to a man who is obliged to be diligent in his worldly business. He would not be justified in abandoning secular pursuits, for there is no compensation connected with these offices. Many a one would cheer-

fully serve for one term occasionally, who could not do it permanently. Rotation affords this relief.

2. It affords an opportunity to secure the services of new men coming into the church. After a church has been fully organized with such materials as were at hand at the time, it may increase, and members be added, who would make better officers than those whom it was necessary to take at the first. The limitation of the term of service puts it into the power of the church to use such material to advantage, and thus men of judgment, piety and influence are brought into office, who, under other circumstances, could not have been.

3. It is calculated to give to the largest number an interest in church matters and familiarity with them, and thus the activity and intelligence of many members are increased. The worth of many a one has been unknown until he was placed by the Church in a responsible station, for true worth is ever modest and retiring.

4. It may happen that a man is in office, of whom it is desirable to get rid in the easiest way possible. If he were guilty of heresy or immorality the mode of procedure would be plain. But very frequently this is not the case. The man, when elected, may have been unexceptionable, but events have since occurred that have destroyed his usefulness. Perhaps he is a man of piety, but weak-minded, or vain-glorious, arbitrary or obstinate, or by reason of some mental obliquity an unpleasant, and by no means influential church officer. What can you do with him if he is chosen for life, and not a subject for discipline? It may, perhaps, be said,

that he should resign, and if he does not of his own accord, should be advised to that course. This is well, but who does not know that they who ought to resign, usually will not, and that such characters as we have described are the very last ones to take such advice. By our mode they are silently dropped, and they fall back among the private members of the church. Yet elders and deacons on going out of the present acting consistory, do not lose every function of office, for the elder, though not in the consistory, may sit as a delegate in the classis and synods. Besides, when any very important matters are to be discussed, the Great Consistory is called, which is composed of all who have ever been elders or deacons, and has advisory power, which is usually respected by the acting consistory.

We consider this ancient plan in our Church, of a limitation of the term of office, to be attended with the manifest advantages we have enumerated. It was the custom formerly in the Church of Scotland, and is still practiced in the French Protestant Church. At Geneva, the cradle of Presbyterianism, the elders were elected annually.* Rev. Dr. Miller admits that there is no infringement on the Presbyterian principle in annual elections. "Where a church," says he, "is large, containing a sufficient number of grave, pious, and prudent members to furnish an advantageous rotation, and where the duties of the office are many and arduous, it may not be without its advantages to keep up some change of incumbency in this office."†

* Henry's "Life of Calvin," vol. i., p. 385.

† Essay on Ruling Elders, p. 276-8.

Undoubtedly the chief aim should be to secure the best men possible for church officers, and to take advantage of the principle of rotation to gain that end, but never to change if it must be for the worse. It is better continually to re-elect a good man, than to put an objectionable one into his place, merely from respect to the principle of rotation. It is thought by some that every male member of the church must take his turn in office, and has a right to expect in due time to be elected, but this is no more true than that every good citizen may look for his turn to be elected to the Legislature or Congress.

II. ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES.

These are threefold: 1. *Consistorial*. 2. *Classical*. 3. *Synodical*.

I. *The Consistory* is the governing power in every particular church, and is composed of the minister, elders, and deacons. Originally, the term consistory was applied to the minister and elders, while the deacons formed a separate board. But in America they have always been united in one. The elders and deacons have their separate peculiar functions, as we have seen, and also their joint powers. Thus in admitting members to the communion, in exercising discipline, and in choosing delegates to the classis, the elders alone have a voice with the minister, while the deacons alone have the charge of the poor.

“When joined together in one board, the elders and deacons have all an equal voice in whatever relates to

the temporalities of the church, to the calling of a minister, or the choice of their own successors, in all which they are considered the general and joint representatives of the people."*

In the churches, at least in the States of New York and New Jersey, the consistory is the legal corporation. It is the Board of Trustees to manage the temporal matters. In this we differ from the Presbyterian Churches, which have boards of trustees separate from the session, in whom the title of property is vested, and who have entire control of the temporalities. These are chosen by the congregation, may be composed of persons who are not church members, and constitute a body independent of the session.

This feature in our polity, we think, has advantages in preventing a clashing of interests, and disputes about prerogative, and as a testimony in favor of a Christian spirit, and against carnal policy in the management of church temporalities. It may not be denied, however, that the consideration of the temporalities is apt to consume an undue proportion of the time of the consistory, which thus practically degenerates into a committee of ways and means. Yet, the advantage of giving men, who pretend not to piety, a controlling influence in church affairs, and securing the help of shrewd calculators, may be very dearly bought. Moreover, temporal and spiritual interests in a church are more closely connected than men commonly suppose, and it seems desirable that the same persons should preside over both, at least where the ecclesiastical or-

* Constitution.

ganization is one in which the people are fairly represented.

This feature in our polity existed from the time of the introduction of the Church into this country. In 1784, the Legislature of the State of New York passed an act directing the churches of all denominations to elect Boards of Trustees for the management of the temporalities. These were to be separate from the spiritual power, and one third of the members were annually to go out of office. Vigorous efforts were made at once by members of the Dutch Church, and especially by Dr. Livingston, to procure the passage of a clause in the act, which should allow her to follow her long-established practice. The Legislature finally assented, and enacted that the ministers, elders, and deacons elected according to the rules and usages of such churches within the State shall be the trustees for every such church or congregation.*

Members are admitted to the church by confession of faith, or by certificate from other Reformed churches, and their names are published to the congregation and registered. When a member removes to another congregation, it is enjoined to take a certificate of dismissal. Consistories are obliged to keep regular minutes of their acts, and to lay the same before the classis for examination. The right to call ministers is lodged in the acting consistory, but they are enjoined to consult the great consistory, and also to ascertain the choice of the people, in such way as they may deem proper. When a call is made, a neighboring

* *Memoirs of Livingston*, p. 287.

minister must be present, and report to the classis whether it was done regularly and harmoniously. In the call, the services required are stipulated, and a return of affection, obedience, and temporal support is promised, to which the successors of the present consistory are bound. The plan of stated supplies and annual contracts has always been discouraged in our church, on the ground, that it makes the minister's work that of an hireling, and the connection of minister and people liable to be broken at any moment, by caprice or passion.

II. *The Classis*.—This corresponds to the Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church. It is composed of a number of ministers (not less than three), and one elder delegated from each church, within certain bounds prescribed by the particular synod. Stated meetings are held twice a year. To the classis it belongs to approve of calls, to dismiss ministers from their congregations, to ordain, discipline, and depose ministers, and to exercise a general supervisory power over consistories. The classis is also a court of appeal in judicial cases, from the decisions of consistories. The consistory presents an annual report to the classis on the state of religion, and at the same time every pastor and elder is obliged to answer the following questions:

“1. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your congregation in their purity agreeably to the Word of God, the confession of faith, and the catechisms of our Church?

“2. Is the Heidelberg Catechism regularly explained

agreeably to the constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church?

"3. Are the catechizing of the children and the instruction of the youth faithfully attended to?

"4. Is family visitation faithfully performed?

"5. Is the 5th section, 2d article, 2d chapter in the Constitution of our Church (referring to oversight and discipline), carefully obeyed?

"6. Is the temporal contract between ministers and people fulfilled in your congregation?"

III. *The Particular and General Synods.*—Of the former there are two, the Synods of New York and Albany. These differ in one respect from the synods of the Presbyterian Church, in that they are delegated bodies composed of two ministers and two elders from every classis under their jurisdiction, whereas the Presbyterian synods are composed of all the ministers within a certain district, and an elder from every church in that district.

The Particular Synod is a court of appeal from the decisions of the classes, has the power to form new classes, and to transfer congregations from one classis to another, and has a general supervisory power over the classes. At every examination of a candidate for licensure or ordination, the Particular Synod has an officer, called a Deputatus, present, to report whether it has been conducted according to the constitution. Statistical reports and reports on the state of religion are annually made to these synods by the classes.

The General Synod is also a delegated body, composed of three ministers and three elders from every

classis. These are nominated by the classes, and confirmed by the Particular Synods. The General Synod meets annually on the first Wednesday in June, and usually remains about ten days in session.

This is the final court of appeal in judicial cases. It has the power to constitute Particular Synods, and to make changes in them. It appoints theological professors, and has the whole control of the Theological Seminary. It is the channel of friendly correspondence with other churches. The various boards are the creations of the General Synod, and directly responsible to it. This body has, in short, a general supervisory power over the concerns of the whole Church.

The General Synod, however, has no independent power to alter or amend what belongs to the Constitution of the Church. It can only recommend alterations and amendments, which must be submitted to the classes, and be adopted only by the votes of a majority of the classes.

It is worthy of notice that in this form of government there is a lay representation throughout. In the consistory there are usually eight laymen to one minister—in the classis there is intended to be an equal number of ministers and elders, though ministers without charge sometimes give the preponderance to the clergy, and sometimes vacant congregations give it to the eldership. To the synod an equal number of clerical and lay delegates is always appointed.

III. EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE.

The reasonableness and importance of this are almost self-evident. It is reasonable that they who disgrace the Church by their conduct, should be removed from it, so that they may not continue as stumbling-blocks in the way of others; moreover the New Testament clearly enjoins it.*

The ends of discipline are represented by the constitution to be "the removal of offenses, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the promotion of purity, and the general edification of the Church, and also the benefit of the offender." We may well call particular attention to this last-mentioned end, for discipline is thought by many to be an act of revenge, very sweet to those who inflict it, instead of a duty performed in sorrow, and with a view of saving the soul of the erring. Hence the friends of one who is under discipline are apt to find fault with the church authorities, instead of thanking them for their faithfulness, and co-operating with them in endeavors to save one whom they profess to love.

Great care, prudence, and tenderness are required in this work. We may be over-zealous and pluck up the wheat with the tares. There are very many in the Church so thoroughly worldly, that we can not believe them to be subjects of renewing grace, and yet they can not be reached by discipline, for they do not hold erroneous doctrines, neglect ordinances, nor commit

* Matt. xviii. 15; 1 Cor. v. 4.

scandalous sins. A wide margin must also be left for the decisions of different consciences on matters about which the Word of God is silent. Another man's conscience may allow what mine condemns, and I have no right to judge him by my conscience.

The Constitution says, "Nothing shall be admitted as matter of accusation, or considered an offense, which can not be proved to be such from Scripture, or the regulations of the Church founded on Scripture."

Offenses are divided into two classes, private and public. "A private offense is one that is known to an individual only, or to very few." The course of procedure in such a case, is laid down by the Saviour, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. An offended person may not noise abroad his grievance, nor betake himself to the consistory, nor keep silence and cherish a grudge in his heart, nor even wait for the offender to come and make acknowledgment, but he must go at once to the offender and tell him his fault without any witness present. If this fail, he must take one or two witnesses with him. If this fail, he must come to the church authorities. Hence when a man comes to the consistory with a charge against another, he is always asked whether he has pursued the above course. If he has not, he is himself censured. If he has, the consistory is bound to investigate the matter. In cases of discipline the minister and elders compose the spiritual court.

Public offenses are such as are notorious and scandalous, and so known through the community that no private measures could obviate their evil effects. In

such cases the consistory is bound to act immediately. If the offender be a minister, they may close the church against him, and demand an investigation by the classis. If he be an elder, deacon, or private member, the consistory must put him on trial.

It is an old custom of the Church in the Netherlands, and perpetuated here by a constitutional law, that at the meeting of the consistory, held before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the elders shall all be solemnly asked by the minister, whether they know of any one who has walked unworthily and departed from the Christian profession. Sometimes cases are mentioned of those who have become negligent, and committees are appointed to confer with, and tenderly admonish them. Sometimes cases are reported that compel the consistory to table charges. The accused is cited to appear; he is furnished with a copy of the charge, and at least ten days are allowed him to put in his answer. If he refuse to appear, he is cited a second time, and warned that if he again refuse, he will not only be liable to censure for contumacy, but that the trial will proceed as if he were present.

The testimony of more than one witness is required to establish a charge. Witnesses may be cross-examined, and their testimony must be recorded, and copies given to the parties, if desired. In short, the utmost care is taken to secure a fair and impartial trial.

There are three forms of punishment. Firstly, for the lightest offenses, admonition; secondly, where there has been a public or gross offense, suspension from the Lord's table. This sentence of suspension

may be published to the congregation or not, at the discretion of the consistory. The consistory has solemn duties to perform to a suspended member. He must be frequently admonished and encouraged to repentance, and prayed for, and restored with joy if he gives evidence of penitence. But if after repeated admonitions he remains incorrigible, the third and last remedy must be resorted to, viz., excommunication. This, however, can not be done without the advice of the classis, and several steps are necessary.

In the first place, the whole history of the case, without mention of the name of the offender, must be publicly given to the congregation, and they be exhorted to pray for him. In the second place, the same thing is to be done, and the name of the offender must be announced. In the third, the congregation is informed, that, unless he repent, he shall be excluded from the communion of the church. Thus their tacit approbation is secured, and the way prepared for the final act, the reading of the form provided for excommunication.

If the excommunicated person becomes penitent, and desires re-admission, it is publicly declared to the congregation, and if no objections are presented, he on professing repentance is publicly re-admitted, according to the form appointed for that purpose.

It is to be regretted that consistories so often neglect to notice cases of departure from a Christian profession until they are compelled by public opinion to do it, and then it is often too late to accomplish any thing but strife and division. The work would be far more

easy and successful, and occasions for it less frequent, if they were careful to mark the first steps of inconsistency in a member, and kindly to admonish him at once.

It is not uncommon to find among church members the notion that they can discipline themselves, or dismiss themselves to the world, or, as they express it, withdraw from the church. They will tell us that they once belonged to some church, and on questioning, we find that their connection with it has not been broken by discipline, nor by dismissal to another church. They have only removed away from the bounds of that church, or if they continue to live within them, have forsaken the ordinances, and think that they have thus been released from the vows that once rested on them. Great would be their astonishment if called to account by the consistory, and yet to this they are clearly liable; for we know nothing of resignation or self-dismissal from the church, or withdrawal to the world. A man can get out of the church only by death, or by an act of exclusion on the part of the church.

Members, likewise, who have removed within the bounds of another church, without taking letters of dismissal, and who have neglected ordinances, are sometimes received by consistories on profession of faith, as if they came directly from the world. If this be a regular procedure, they may be members of two churches at the same time. Is it not proper to require of such persons to make confession of their fault to the church to which they belong, and be reconciled to

it, that they may be prepared to receive a letter of dismission to the church with which they desire to be connected?

The proper and careful exercise of discipline has much to do with the life and prosperity of the Church. When those who lead ungodly lives are removed from her communion, and her members are living epistles read of all men, then she appears, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

It has been our object to give in the foregoing pages a correct view of the history and characteristics of the Reformed Dutch Church. In the light of the history, the question, whether she has made progress, can be intelligently answered. How does her present state compare with her state at the opening of this century? Until that time she was hampered by difficulties that made progress well-nigh impossible. After those difficulties had been removed she began to create her agencies. She struggled long to establish her educational institutions on a firm basis. The Theological Seminary had no fixed place until 1810, nor was the College in successful operation until 1825.

That she has made all the advance possible no one will claim; indeed, that is not to be claimed for any Church in the land. But why should we single out our own for special reproach? Ground has undoubtedly been lost in some places, especially in our large cities, and churches might have been established in many locations at an earlier day. Still there has been a steady, healthy growth, as the following statistics will show :

In 1784 there were 82 churches, and 30 ministers; in 1815 there were 130 churches, and 80 ministers; in 1855 there were 364 churches, and 348 ministers.

From this it appears that two thirds of our churches have been organized within the last forty years, and that the number of ministers has increased during the same period more than fourfold.

But the contemplation of the past is of little profit, unless we are prepared by it to improve the future. Its lessons may be despised only at our peril. The Reformed Dutch Church, as one division of the sacramental host, must do her part in the war against the King's enemies. She must maintain her distinctive character and vigorously carry on the work of extension, or be absorbed by the surrounding large denominations. The historical associations of centuries, the church attachments that have come down from generation to generation, make us shrink from the thought that the name of a Church so venerable and illustrious should cease to be known in this land. Besides, would not her absorption result in so much loss to the cause of the Redeemer! Has she not peculiar facilities for working in some fields; and can she not do more for the cause of Christ, by retaining her separate organization than by a fusion with churches of similar faith and order? In this some wise and liberal members of other denominations agree with us.

Are there any peculiar difficulties in the way of her extension?

Is there any thing lacking in her *doctrine*? So far from it, we believe that her faith is eminently Scrip-

tural. If it be a barrier to progress, it is one that may not be removed.

Is her *government* defective? It rather seems to combine admirably the conservative and popular elements, and when understood, is generally approved.

Is there any thing objectionable in her *worship*? On the contrary she has adopted the mean between the two extremes of naked simplicity and showy form. She has forms which must be used on certain occasions, while perfect liberty is allowed in ordinary worship.

Is her *policy* contracted? She has organized her institutions with a view to extension. She is now engaged in the work, and continually occupying new fields, although she is not ready to adopt wild schemes; is averse to mushroom growth; has no liking for men of one idea; and has confidence alone in a thorough proclamation of the Gospel as the improver of society.

Is her *spirit* illiberal? Entirely the contrary. She was remarkable in Holland for her tolerant and liberal spirit. She received Scotch, English, French, German and Italian Protestants to her bosom. In this country she has lived in peace with her neighbors. She met the Episcopal Church with Christian courtesy when brought into New Amsterdam, and gave her the use of her own building for worship. She has cordially received into her communion the ministers and members of other denominations, and given them honor. Some of our most eminent and devoted ministers have been thus received, and of private members there are none more warmly attached to our institutions than

many who are in the Church from intelligent choice, and without prejudices of birth and early association. We have congregations composed of members who, for the most part, are not of Holland descent, but who have studied the Church, and chosen her to be their ecclesiastical home.

Our people are material that can be worked into any sound Christian denomination. If led by providential circumstances or convictions of duty to other churches, they make as zealous members as any. Prominent in the ranks of other denominations you will find many who, in infancy, received the baptismal seal in the Reformed Dutch Church. They seldom return to their mother Church when opportunity offers, for they love not change. It is not to their discredit that they thus fully identify themselves with the churches in which God, in His providence, has placed them.

It has been contended that her *name* has been, and is, a mighty barrier to her progress. For a long time there were only two Reformed Churches in New York. The one came from the Netherlands, and used the Dutch language; the other from England, and used the English language. The one was known as the Dutch Church, the other as the English. When these churches attained to independent organization in this country, the latter took the distinctive name "Episcopal," from her form of government; the former the name "Dutch," from her nationality. She was in government Presbyterian, but could not take that name because it had been already assumed by another denomination. She could not derive a distinctive name from her doctrines,

for they were identical with the doctrines of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches. She could not, with propriety, at that late day, arrogate to herself the title of the Reformed Church of North America, to which her neighbors had an equal right. She did that to which she seemed shut up. She adopted the name by which she was already known, and which proclaimed her honorable origin. That the name is now an impediment to her progress in many places, every candid man must admit; that there are immense difficulties in the way of its removal, none can deny. The question of a change of name was agitated, and in an excellent spirit thoroughly discussed by the Church in the year 1854, and its inexpediency was declared by an almost unanimous vote of the classes.

A more extensive and thorough acquaintance with the history of the Reformed Dutch Church would increase the attachment of her members, and thus contribute to her efficiency. Of this we have been too neglectful. We have read the histories of other denominations and passed by that of our own. We have joined with others in praise of their noble and heroic ancestors, and have not even inquired whether our own were worthy of remembrance. Pains have been taken that our youth should be well-informed about the manful struggle of the Puritans, about the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock, while they have remained ignorant of the struggle for a century by their own fathers for civil and religious liberty. Let the present generation, at least, learn that no shame can attach to a

member of the Reformed Dutch Church from ancestral associations.

Let her distinctive characteristics be known, and her distinctive customs and usages be respected. Her doctrines, her polity, her forms, are open to the examination of all, and those who are in her communion, at least, should make themselves familiar with them. Nor is the state of society so much changed as to make all her ancient customs now impracticable or even inexpedient. Why can not her former singularly faithful care in catechizing and training the young, be now imitated? Why can not the eldership now be as efficient as it was when every elder had his particular district to watch over, and to report weekly at the meetings of the consistory? Why can not the family visitations, prescribed by the Constitution, be, to a very considerable extent, at least, performed as in former times? Why can not the congregation unite in singing the high praises of God? Why can not the forms that are used at all be used in their integrity? Why can not the Heidelberg Catechism be expounded so as not only to edify but to interest the people? Why can not the salutation be pronounced, and the creed and commandments be read, and the Lord's Prayer offered in ordinary public worship? Why can not the elders and deacons occupy official seats in the congregation? In carrying our Church into new localities, we gain nothing, but lose much by attempting to hide her peculiarities, and by taking pains to show that she is in nowise different from some other well-known denomination. The question very justly presents itself,

Why, if you in no respect differ from your neighbor, are you anxious to perpetuate a separate existence?

Her institutions should receive the cordial and liberal support of her members. It has been said that many of them contribute more readily and largely to union voluntary societies than to the missionary and other boards of their own Church. There may be truth in this, and if so, it is not to their credit. On the one hand, we should not confine our aid to denominational agencies, nor on the other, let them die for want of support. Their liberal support does not prove us sectarians, nor does it interfere with a hearty co-operation with other Christians, in the various noble institutions of benevolence in which they are so pleasantly and efficiently united.

Children should be consecrated to Christ, to serve Him in the various callings of life, and especially in the sacred ministry, for ministers are greatly needed for the supply of new and vacant congregations as well as for the foreign field. It is a sad fact that we are obliged often to resort to other denominations for men to supply our deficiency. Let Christian parents consider this, and pray God to honor them by making their sons ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Property should be laid at the Redeemer's feet. The Church in order to work, and to extend herself, needs men and money. Both are in abundance among us, but alas! to a great extent unavailable. The Spirit of God will, we believe, work a revolution on this subject, and make men acknowledge that the gold and the silver are the Lord's. Self-seeking and avarice can not

stand before the two-edged sword of the truth of God, wielded by the omnipotent Spirit.

While we praise God for our heritage, let us cultivate the liberal spirit of which our Church has from her earliest history been so illustrious an example, and greet all who are of the household of faith as brethren. Above all, let us seek membership in the true Church, which is the company of the redeemed, that glorious Church, which will appear hereafter, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, remembering that we can never enter heaven as members of the Reformed Dutch Church, but only as sinners saved by grace.

APPENDIX.

IN addition to this valuable gift, the Church is under obligation to the liberality of Messrs. James Neilson, David Bishop, and Charles P. Dayton, for the donation of the ground on which the "Peter Herzog Theological Hall" is built.

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